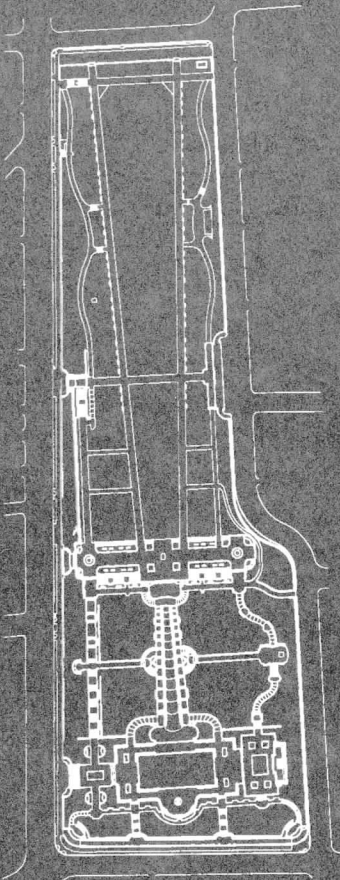




Meridian Hill Park Cultural Landscape Report Vol. 1



National Park Service - National Capital Region
Contract #: 1443X300094034
architrave, p.c. architects, Washington, D.C

31 August 2001

Publication Credits: Information in this publication may be copied and used, with the condition that full credit is given to the authors, their companies, and the National Park Service. Appropriate citations and bibliographic credits should be made for each use.




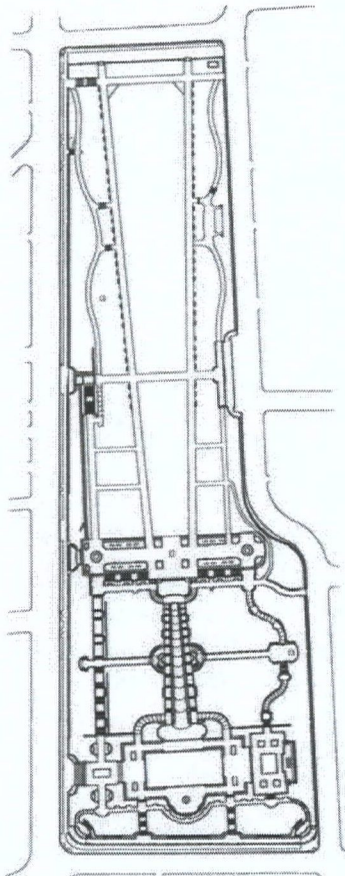
United States Department of the Interior Mission Statement: As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.



Meridian Hill Park

Cultural Landscape Report

Volume 1



National Park Service - National Capital Region
Contract #: 1443X300094034
architrave, p.c. architects, Washington, D.C

31 August 2001

Publication Credits: Information in this publication may be copied and used, with the condition that full credit is given to the authors, their companies, and the National Park Service. Appropriate citations and bibliographic credits should be made for each use.



United States Department of the Interior Mission Statement: As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

Table of Contents

List of Plan Sheets	iii
Project Team.	v
List of Abbreviations	vi
Overview of Park Cultural Landscape Program	vii
Executive Summary	ix
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Location	3
1.2 Significance	5
1.3 Park History in Summary	7
1.4 Management Summary	15
1.5 Methodology, including Additional Research Recommended	21
2. History of the Park	27
2.1 Prologue	29
Establishing a Meridian for the United States	
Early Residents of Meridian Hill	
The Civil War Era	
Senator John Henderson and Mary Foote Henderson	
The City Beautiful Movement and the McMillan Report	
2.2 1910 - 1916	37
2.3 1917 - 1923	51
2.4 1924 - 1927	83
2.5 1928 - 1936	91
2.6 1937 - 1997	133
3. Site Analysis and Evaluation	151
3.1 Introduction	153
3.2 Spatial Organization.	155
Land Use	
Views and Vistas	
Circulation	
3.3 Topography	177
3.4 Vegetation	181

3.5 Structures, Furnishings, and Objects	203
3.5.1 Lodge	219
3.5.1.1 Underground Spaces	220
3.5.2 Water Features	221
3.5.3 Walls and Fences	231
3.5.4 Pavement	243
3.5.5 Benches	265
3.5.6 Play Areas	272
3.5.7 Urns and Planters	274
3.5.8 Trash Receptacles	279
3.5.9 Drinking Fountains	281
3.5.10 Watering and Drainage Systems	284
3.5.11 Lighting	288
Light Standards	
Recessed Lights	
Chandeliers	
3.6 Utilities	303
3.7 Sculpture	309
4. Bibliography	313
4.1 General References and Secondary Sources	
4.2 Plans / Drawings	
4.3 Aerial Photographs	
4.4 Memos and Letters	
4.5 Contemporary Technical Reports	
4.6 Minutes and Reports	
4.7 Interviews	
4.8 Newspapers and Magazines	
4.8.1 Newspapers and Magazines, by title	
Appendix 1: Historical Photographs	A1-1 to A1-38
Appendix 2: Persons Significant to the	
Development of the Park.	A2-1 to A2-10
Appendix 3: National Historic Landmark Nomination . .	A3-1 to A3-24
Appendix 4: CFA Records and Correspondence	A4-1 to A4-22

List of Plan Sheets

Sheet #	Page #
1 1996 Existing Plan (pre-1937 trees and hedges that are still present are indicated)	11
2 Location Terms	13
3 Level of Completion 1916	49
4 Construction 1916-1923	53
5 Planting 1916-1923	55
6 Construction 1924-1927	85
7 Planting 1924-1927	89
8 Construction 1928-1930	93
9 Planting 1928-1930	95
10 Construction 1931-1933	113
11 Planting 1931-1933	115
12 Construction 1934-1936	129
13 Planting 1934-1936	131
14 Spatial Organization	157
15 Views and Vistas	159
16 (not used)	
17 Topography	179
18 1936 As-Planted Plan 1	187
19 1936 As-Planted Plan 2	189
20 1936 As-Planted Plan 3	191
21 1936 As-Planted Plan 4	193
22 (not used)	

23	1996 Existing Planting 1	195
24	1996 Existing Planting 2	197
25	1996 Existing Planting 3	199
26	1996 Existing Planting 4	201
27	Water Features	223
28	Walls and Fences	237
29	Pavement - Concrete Types	253
30	Lower Plaza - Pavement 1	255
31	Cascades - Pavement 2	257
32	Great Terrace - Pavement 3	259
33	Mall (Mid) - Pavement 4	261
34	Mall (Upper) - Pavement 5	263
35	1997 Benches	265
36	Planting Urns and Wall Pockets	275
37	(not used)	
38	Existing Conditions 1	293
39	Existing Conditions 2	295
40	Existing Conditions 3	297
41	Existing Conditions 4	299
42	(not used)	
43	Light Fixtures	301
44	Drainage Systems	305
45	1996 Existing Site Furnishings:	307
	Play Areas	
	Trash Receptacles	
	Drinking Fountains	
	Sculpture	

Project Team

National Park Service

Rock Creek Park:

Adrienne A. Coleman, Superintendent

Cynthia Cox, Assistant Superintendent

Julia Washburn, Chief of Resource Management and Interpretation

Stephen Strach, Cultural Resource Management Specialist

Daniel Hodgson, Facilities and Maintenance

National Capital Region:

Darwina L. Neal, Chief, Cultural Resource Preservation Services

Maureen Joseph, Chief Historic Landscape Architect

Perry Wheelock, Landscape Historian

Rebecca Stevens, Chief Historic Architect

Consultants for the Project:

Architect:

architrave p.c., architects

420 10th Street, SE

Washington, D.C. 20003-2133

(202) 544-1640

Judith M. Capen, AIA, project manager

Landscape Architect:

Land Ethics, Inc.

P.O. Box 4310

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

Elizabeth Brabec, ASLA

Peter Kumble, ASLA

List of Abbreviations

CFA	Commission of Fine Arts
DSC	Denver Service Center
HABS	Historic American Buildings Survey of Meridian Hill Park, # DC-532
MHP	Meridian Hill Park
MRCE	Museum Resource Center (formerly MARS)
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NCR	National Capital Region
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NPS	National Park Service
ROCR	Rock Creek Park management jurisdiction, which includes MHP and incorporates most of the park properties formerly under the jurisdiction of National Capital Parks -North.
RCP-CRF	Rock Creek Park, Cultural Resource Files, located at MRCE
RG	Record Group

Overview of Park Cultural Landscape Program

“Over the past fifteen years cultural landscapes have become an integral component of historic preservation in the U.S. and abroad. In turn, the National Park Service (NPS) has come to recognize the significance of cultural landscapes to our national heritage, making the stewardship of these resources an important part of the Service’s mission.

“Since at least the 1930’s, the NPS has recognized the significance of the landscape in it’s [sic] management of historical areas...”¹ and recently it has been recognized that “landscapes are cultural resources because they are a record of our history, our relationship with the natural world, and our ideals of beauty and the quality of life.”²

“Until very recently, however, there were no policies, guidelines, or standards for the preservation and management of cultural landscapes in the system. In 1988, ‘cultural landscapes’ were formally identified in *NPS Management Policies* as a type of cultural resource...”³ and in 1996, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* was published.

The recognition of the significance of landscapes as cultural resources has led to the development of Cultural Landscape Reports, a detailed and careful examination process, by NPS in its role as custodian of a diverse range of sites held in trust for the nation.

“The cultural landscape report (CLR) is the principal treatment document for cultural landscapes. It guides park management decisions regarding treatment and use, and focuses on treating and preserving the physical attributes, biotic systems, and use of a landscape when that use contributes to historical significance. The overriding purpose of the report is to establish a preservation philosophy based on research, inventory, documentation, analysis, and evaluation which provides the foundation for making sound management decisions. Additionally, the information on the historical development, significance, and existing character of a landscape is a valuable tool for enhancing interpretation and maintenance in a park. As such, a CLR is the primary tool for long-term management of a cultural landscape.”⁴

1 *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 1998.

2 Marie Rust, Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, National Park Service, Boston Massachusetts in “Foreword” of *Cultural Landscape Report for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Vol. 2 Landscape Preservation Treatment Recommendations*. 1994.

3 *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*

4 *Ibid.*

The *Cultural Landscape Report Volume 1* becomes the broadly accepted reference document for those involved in the resource. Decisions then must be made about *approaches* to management and care of the landscape. These approaches are called “Treatment Alternatives” and are included in Volume 2 of the CLR.

Volume 2 of the Cultural Landscape Report for Meridian Hill Park includes Treatment Alternatives for this park with detailed development of the preferred treatment alternative.

An appendix at the end of this document includes terminology used throughout these documents, terminology used herein with very specific meanings.

The Cultural Landscape Report for Meridian Hill Park was contracted in October 1995 with a final draft released to the public in late 1999 and presented in various public forums in late 1999 and early 2000 with comments solicited and received from the public, which have been addressed in this volume.

This volume generally reflects conditions at the park during the period of preparation of this report, 1995 to 1999.

Executive Summary

The idea for a park on Meridian Hill originated with Senate Report No.166 on "The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia," commonly called the McMillan Commission Report, in 1902. Acquisition of land for the park was hastened by the unremitting efforts of Mary Henderson, wife of Senator John Henderson of Missouri. Mary Henderson, whose public spirit and interests as a large property owner along 16th Street are hard to separate, had grand plans for the transformation of 16th Street into the "Avenue of Presidents," lined with fine embassy buildings. Legislation passed in 1910 authorized acquisition of land for the park.

Design and Construction of the Park

By 1912, the Federal Government had acquired the land for Meridian Hill Park from the Hendersons and other landowners by purchase or condemnation, clearing of the site was begun, and George Burnap, landscape architect for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, was chosen to design the park. Horace Peaslee, architect for the park from 1917 until its official opening in 1936, was hired as landscape designer.

In 1913, Burnap took a design for Meridian Hill Park to the Commission of Fine Arts. After various submissions and refinements, the design was approved in 1914 with authorization to submit it to Congress. The Commission and designers of the park saw the park as an important undertaking that "would be of benefit to all the people of the United States." The park concept, with an upper mall, great terrace overlook, cascades flanked by hillside gardens, and a lower plaza, was established and a working relationship between the designers of the park and the Commission of Fine Arts in the evolution of its design was begun.

Construction of park structures began in 1915 with the first of a series of test sections of the 16th Street retaining wall to develop the ground-breaking exposed aggregate concrete techniques used throughout the rest of the park. John Joseph Earley, who became a master in the use of exposed aggregate concrete, helped develop the techniques employed on these walls. After 1917, when George Burnap returned to private practice, Horace Peaslee, Ferruccio Vitale, and landscape architects of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, especially Irving Payne, continued to work with the Commission to simplify and refine the overall plan and planting design, especially the mall and hillside gardens. They also refined and developed the architectural details, a process that continued through completion of the park. The upper portion of the park opened to the public in 1923; the entire park was officially completed and opened in 1936.

Meridian Hill Park was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994 because of its significance as a formal designed historic landscape - one of less than twenty historic designed landscapes out of nearly twenty-three hundred National Historic Landmarks, with 1910 to 1936 as its period of significance. The landmark nomination states, "The park is perhaps the most ambitious and successful example of neoclassical park design in the United States.... The breadth of ambition, its remarkable integrity, and its masterful sureness of design and construc-

tion single it out for recognition.” A major aspect of this recognition, according to the nomination, was the “technological achievement of the park’s concrete construction,” unprecedented at the time, that “...distinguishes Meridian Hill as a nationally significant historic resource.” This concrete, developed by Washington craftsman John J. Earley and his studio, has not been matched since. The fact that the concrete structural components of the park are still remarkably intact after over sixty years is a testimony to the construction technology he developed. However, because that technology was so specific, repair and reconstruction of missing and damaged elements to match the originals has proven difficult.

Issues

Even though design and construction of the park spanned twenty-four years due to incremental and uncertain funding under annual appropriations from Congress typical for that time, the original design concept remained intact, with major decisions made early and executed incrementally as funding was available.

The record of the evolution of the design, construction, and history of the park is extraordinarily voluminous - internal and external correspondence, minutes of Commission of Fine Arts meetings, various iterations of design and construction drawings, student theses, and magazine and newspaper articles. Issues and areas of continuing concern woven throughout this documentation include:

Use: From the beginning, Meridian Hill Park was conceived as a formal public park that would “greatly enhance the beauty of the city and its environments” while “attracting large numbers of visitors from all over the city.” Thus, although it was to be used for passive recreation by residents of both the city and neighborhood, it was not established as a neighborhood park to provide active recreation opportunities. The only play facilities incorporated in the historic design were low-key sand boxes or hedge-enclosed grassed play areas. Even so, correspondence dating from the early years of the park documents the continuing conflict between neighborhood use for active play and maintenance of turf on the mall.

Performances and concerts in the park were an anticipated recreational use from the beginning and it was indeed used for a variety of types of performances, including the starlight concerts of the 40’s, dance recitals, and musical events in the 60’s and 70’s, continuing to the present, staged at various locations in the park with temporary facilities. Photos document seating along the cascades and around the lower pool in the 1940’s and 60’s and temporary facilities on both the lower plaza and adjacent to the great terrace.

Public concerts in Washington began as early as 1935 at the site of Washington’s historic watergate, part of public policy designed to provide entertainment for the burgeoning city population during the Depression and continuing into the war and post-war years in summers unrelieved by either air conditioning or television. Early performances at Meridian Hill Park were part of this effort, while performances in the late 60’s were part of the city-wide calming after the ‘68 riots to provide more recreational opportunities. While permanent concert stages, concert gardens, pavilions, and “tempiettos” were proposed at various stages of the design of the park, the final approved simple platform was never constructed.

Name: Meridian Hill Park took its name from the neighborhood in which it was located, called “Meridian Hill” as early as 1815. Although various proposals to rename it have been advanced over the years such as Henderson Park for Mary Henderson, Buchanan Park for President Buchanan, and Malcolm X, for the Civil Rights leader, the official name remains Meridian Hill Park, as cast in concrete over the 16th Street niche. In fact, because it contains a presidential memorial, it cannot be named for anyone else.

Sculpture: The design and location of the six sculptures in Meridian Hill Park, all gifts, were approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and some by Congress. The Armillary Sphere and Buchanan Memorial were original works, while Joan of Arc, Serenity, and Dante were copies of works located elsewhere. The final gift was a plaque memorializing a privately placed stone memorializing the short-lived location of the United States meridian. This somewhat miscellaneous assortment of sculpture in the park has been commented on by many, including Peaslee who nonetheless considered even more unusual proposals during construction such as replicas of Niagara Falls and Old Faithful, installation of stalactites above the fountains in the 16th Street entrance, and plaques memorializing early residents of the site or identifying the views from the park, none of them implemented. Also considered over the years have been various locations for the Joan of Arc statue. Originally, the Dante location was to be temporary, and Serenity was damaged so early that proposals were made for her removal for safekeeping. Nevertheless, they all remain in their original locations.

Vegetation: In the early years of the park, landscape architects with the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds prepared planting plans for each area as it was constructed. Ferruccio Vitale was hired in 1919 to develop an overall planting plan for the park, which then served as the basis for subsequent planting plans prepared by Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and National Capital Parks landscape architects. Changes in types and/or massings of plantings were made to respond to refinements in the park design, evolving aesthetics of those involved with the planting design, and survivability of implemented plantings during the long period of construction. The extensive record of the evolution of the planting design and the fact that the vegetative aspect of the park is more dynamic over time than the structural components makes it more difficult to document with certainty.

Security: Early correspondence and newspaper articles indicate that the park was subject to vandalism from its earliest construction phases. Likewise, safety has been an early and continuing concern. As an urban walled park in an economically and ethnically diverse neighborhood, the park has often been perceived as unsafe, justifiably or not.

Maintenance: The availability of sufficient funds and staff to maintain Meridian Hill Park has also been an early and continuing concern, as indicated by letters from Peaslee to National Capital Parks officials in the 1950’s decrying the lack of maintenance and restoration funding to keep up what was originally a \$1.5 million investment. The degree of maintenance over the years fluctuated as a reflection of both national and city economic exigencies and changes in administrative authorities within the National Park Service.

Today the park faces the typical challenges of both historic landscape management and a heavily-used urban site. Over the years, replacement of original plant materials with different types of materials, non-replacement of aged or dead original materials, and the gradual evolution

of the plantings through aging, changing environmental conditions, maintenance practices, and in response to park security concerns have altered many aspects of the original planting, even though the park built elements remain remarkably intact.

Because of its extraordinary significance as one of the few designed historic landscapes designated as a National Historic Landmark whose integrity is essentially intact, it is crucial that the treatment prescribed for Meridian Hill Park be done in accordance with nationally-established standards for managing historic landscapes and resources.

1. Introduction

1.1 Location

Meridian Hill Park is located in Washington, D.C. approximately one and one-half miles north of the White House (see figure 1). It is one of Washington's most important and historic parks in the tradition of the monumental, federal parks of the Mall. Bounded by 16th Street on the west, Euclid Street on the north, 15th Street on the east, and W Street on the south, Meridian Hill Park is located within a diverse and changing neighborhood (see figure 2). Originally envisioned as "a classical villa landscape at the center of a vibrant and interesting residential neighborhood,"¹ the park continues to play an important role in the physical as well as social landscape of the neighborhood.

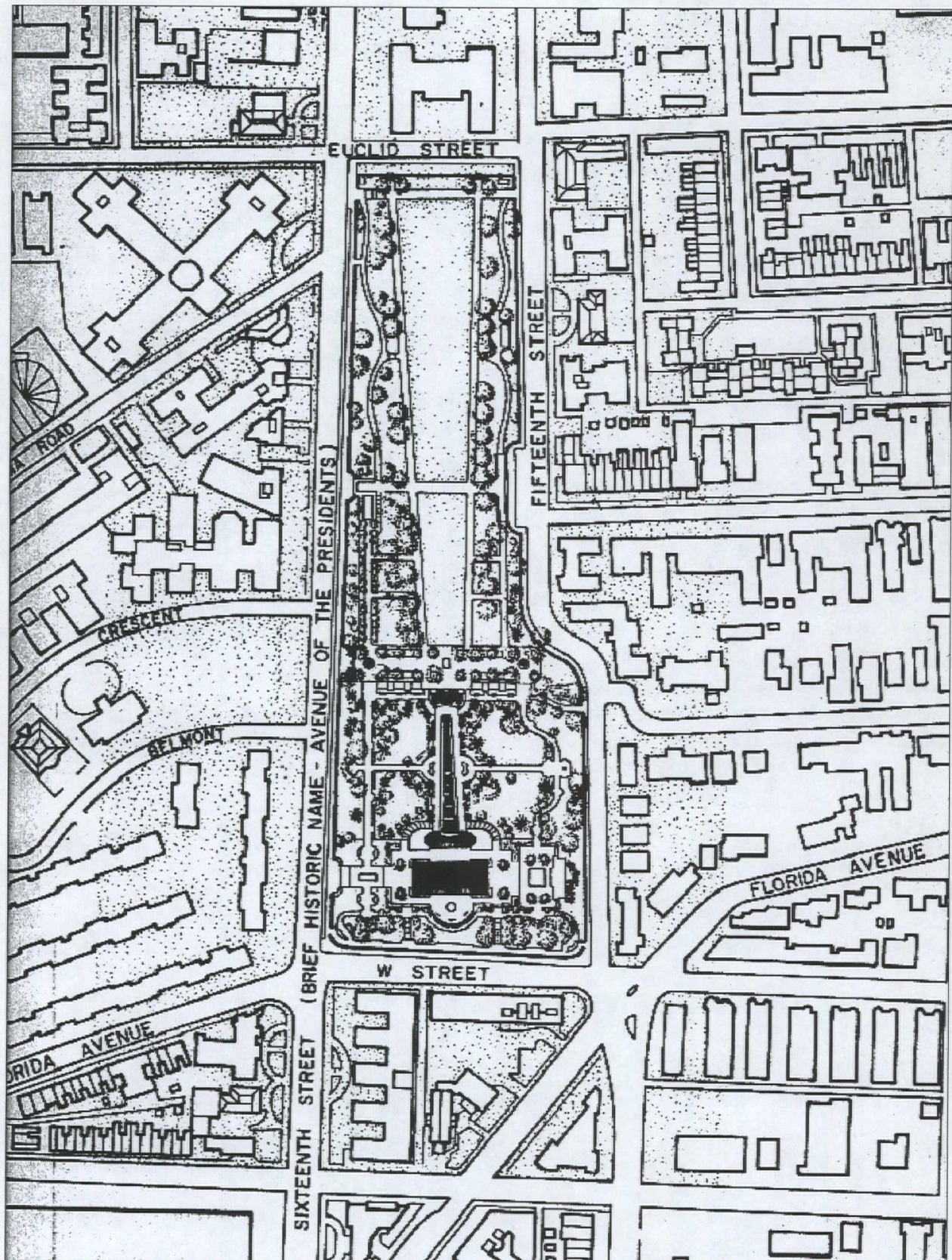
Owned by the United States Government and maintained by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior since it was formally turned over to the agency in 1933, Meridian Hill Park was developed with federal money and heavily influenced by funding and directives from Congress.



Figure 1: Meridian Hill Park in relationship to the White House (HABS, Sheet 1, 1985).

1 NHL Nomination, p. 12.

Figure 2: Meridian Hill Park and surrounding neighborhood (HABS, Sheet 1, 1985).



1.2 Significance

Meridian Hill Park was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994, as “an outstanding accomplishment of early 20th-century Neoclassicist park design in the United States.”² The design of the park “inspired by Italian Renaissance landscape design, crystallized the Neoclassicist idealism that has imbued civic planning for Washington since 1791.”³

Meridian Hill Park was “one of the first public parks in the United States to be designed as a formal park...an effort in a democratic society to match the major European City park”⁴ as a formal design open to the public. The statement of significance in the Landmark document reads:

“The scope and ambition of Meridian Hill Park set it apart; the idea of creating a Renaissance villa landscape in the middle of an American city to serve as a public park and cultural institution has no parallel. The park is perhaps the most ambitious and successful example of Neoclassical park design in the United States, and it is an example of extremely high artistic merit of the adaptation of Renaissance and Baroque landscape design principles to the municipal park. The breadth of its ambition, its remarkable integrity, and the masterful sureness of its design and construction single it out for recognition.”⁵

To achieve this grand vision, it was essential to the park’s design intent that the architectural and horticultural elements work together, reinforcing the spatial design and character of the park.

Meridian Hill Park was acquired, designed and constructed over a period of about 26 years between 1910 and 1936, the period of significance established in the NHL nomination. It benefited from the work of several noted architects and landscape architects of the period, Horace W. Peaslee, George Burnap, and Ferruccio Vitale. Under the guidance of the federally-appointed Commission of Fine Arts, the park was designed and redesigned several times before actual construction, and continued to be modified during the construction phases of the project. Although park design and construction spanned 26 years, the park retains most of the original design concepts from Burnap’s 1914 plan and Peaslee’s 1917 refinement of that plan. (Compare figures 16 and 19 with plan sheets 1 and 2.).

2 NHL Nomination, p. 12.

3 *Ibid.*

4 National Park Service, “Meridian Hill Park, Historical American Buildings Survey, No. DC -532” (National Park Service, 1985, photocopy) p. 1. Hereinafter cited as HABS.

5 NHL Nomination, p. 13.

The use of sites such as this for formal public parks was recommended by the McMillan Report, a plan that was intended to reinforce the original axial plan for the city prepared by Pierre L'Enfant. Inspired by the City Beautiful Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both the McMillan Report and the design of the park exemplify neoclassical forms. The axial forms of the park, with a mall, a great terrace, flowing cascades and a lower plaza embody concepts of the City Beautiful Movement, the design precedents of Italian and French Renaissance and Baroque gardens, and L'Enfant's plan for the City of Washington.

Two excursions were made to Europe by the designers of the park to study historical precedents: in 1914 by Burnap, Peaslee, other members of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and members of the Commission of Fine Arts; and then again by Peaslee in 1929 to study the design and construction of water features in Paris and Vaux-le-Vicomte. It is clear, however, that the design of the park was not merely reflective of the impressions gained from these trips, since the design of the park was in fact determined well in advance of the first trip. The trips provided an opportunity to study European models and to refine the details and implementation of the design. Although there were clear indications of the influence of such famous gardens as Pincian Hill in Rome, Boboli Gardens in Florence, and Villa d'Este in Tivoli in the sketches and writings of Horace Peaslee, the design motifs from these gardens were merely used as guides, expressed ultimately in design form and details that were unique to Meridian Hill.

The park is also significant for its concrete work, which marked an important development in the use of concrete for ornamental purposes. Through contractor John Earley's development of exposed aggregate construction methods for the walls, benches, urns and walkways, the site incorporates some of the best and earliest examples of the use of this type of material in the country:

"The terraces, stairs, walls and pavements - almost all the structural elements in this highly structured landscape - were rendered in precast and cast-in-place concrete, treated in a variety of ways to expose the different aggregates used in the mixes. ...Details were formed with sensitivity and precision through a series of technical innovations in casting and finishing. Varied colors and sizes of the exposed aggregates artfully recalled the patterns and textures of the decorative mosaic and tile work of the Renaissance masons. The articulation of the formal historical models of the park in this advanced construction technology created a striking juxtaposition that lent a unique appearance and character to the park."⁶

1.3 Park History in Summary

The McMillan Report of 1901, which was developed by the Senate Park Commission, called for the revival and preservation of the Pierre L'Enfant Plan for the city of Washington. Spawned by the City Beautiful Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the McMillan Report built on the formal, axial plan of L'Enfant, defining areas of existing and future parks and green spaces in the city. Congress created the United States Commission of Fine Arts on May 17, 1910 "...to advise upon the location of statues, fountains, and monuments in the public spaces, streets, and parks in the District of Columbia..."⁷ The acquisition of the Meridian Hill Park site for one of the first formal public parks in the United States was completed in September, 1912.

Meridian Hill Park was acquired, designed and constructed over a 26-year period from 1910 to 1936. Design development of the park did not begin in earnest until 1912, when landscape architect George Burnap was chosen to direct the design of the park. In the same year, Horace Peaslee, later to become the primary architect for the Park, was appointed to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds as a landscape designer. In 1913 and early 1914, Burnap, influenced by the City Beautiful Movement, developed the first plan for the park (see figure 16), incorporating open plazas, easy circulation, accessibility, a music concourse in the upper park, and an auto entrance with provisions for parking cars. Revisions later that year included the Commission's recommendation of a memorial to President Buchanan in the lower plaza area.

In 1914, George Burnap, Horace Peaslee and members of the Fine Arts Commission traveled to France, Spain, Switzerland and Italy to study the European parks and gardens that provided the inspiration for the design of Meridian Hill. By March of 1914, the Commission gave preliminary approval to the Burnap Plan for the park. Although this plan differs in some elements from the design of the park that was ultimately executed, the essential structure of the original plan for the park survives today. The Burnap plan included the long, essentially flat expanse of the mall, the great walled terrace, the cascades and the formal lower plaza.

Over the course of the park's history, the features and designed spaces of the park have been given a variety of names. To avoid confusion, these terms have been standardized and used consistently throughout this report as indicated in plan sheet 2.

Construction commenced in 1915 with the lower retaining wall on the 16th Street side of the park. At this time, John Earley was hired to develop the construction techniques for the distinc-

7 Sue A. Kohler, Historian of the Commission, The Commission of Fine Arts, A Brief History 1910-1995. The Commission of Fine Arts, The Pension Building, Washington, D.C.

tive exposed aggregate concrete used for the retaining walls and finally for all of the concrete elements and surfaces within the park. Construction of retaining walls continued, with the terrace retaining wall and the upper portion of the wall along 16th Street. The excavated material from the construction of the terrace retaining wall was used to level the upper portion of the park.

In 1917, George Burnap resigned from the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and Horace Peaslee assumed design responsibility for Meridian Hill Park. Peaslee remained the architect in charge of the project for the next 18 years.

From 1917 through final plan development in 1920, Peaslee simplified Burnap's plan for the park. Most of the changes took place in the mall, with the removal of vehicular circulation on the mall and the reduction of the 1914 concert garden to a small circular bandstand or "tempietto", located at the end of the mall near the great terrace. (Compare the 1914 plan in figure 16 to the 1917 plan in figure 19). This bandstand was never executed and disappeared from the plan after 1930.

Below the great terrace, the lower gardens were altered only slightly from the 1914 plan. The four "wilderness groves" or "boscoss" were retained, but simplified, and the bridge across the cascades was removed. The plans for the lower plaza were altered in 1917 to locate the Buchanan Memorial on the east side of the reflecting pool and add an entrance to 16th Street on the west side of the pool. Previously, the Commission had recommended a location for the Buchanan Memorial at the southern end of the main axis of the park. Therefore, relocating the Buchanan Memorial changed the focal point of the main axis through the cascades and lower plaza from the memorial to the Armillary Sphere. Placing the Buchanan Memorial to the east also provided an enclosure of this end of the plaza, and a subtle refocus of the plaza to an east-west axis across the north-south axis of the cascades.

In 1919, Ferruccio Vitale, of the firm of Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert of New York City, became the chief landscape architect for the park, and, in July of that year, obtained approval for a preliminary planting plan submitted to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. This planting plan detailed the vegetation for Peaslee's final simplified plan approved by the Commission of Fine Arts on July 30, 1920. The 1920 simplified plan was not substantially different from the 1917 Peaslee plan; the bridge crossing over the cascades had been eliminated as had an oval amphitheater on the east ascent of the lower gardens. In addition, the plan for the entire lower plaza had been simplified.

The planting plan as detailed by Vitale in 1919, reinforced the spatial organization of the site and at the same time softened the architectural features. Along the mall, formal, clipped hedges against a backdrop of tall oaks and informal underplantings reinforced the forced perspective of the northern portion of the mall, while densely planted groves of oaks flanked the mall towards the great terrace. A significant feature of the main 16th Street entrance was the linden allee leading directly to the great terrace.

The hillside gardens were divided into four wilderness groves or boscoss, which initially were specified to be planted largely with evergreen trees, providing a similar character and quality as found in Italian Villa gardens. As the plan evolved over the years, the hillside gardens became open, woodland groves of sycamores with understory plantings of dogwoods and redbud and a

ground cover of English ivy (*Hedera helix gracilis*). Formal, clipped hedges of American Holly edged the cascades and the eastern side of the west ascent.

The lower plaza was designed to be a formal space, with a clearly defined, open ground plane. The plantings designed to reinforce this concept were “walls” of formal, clipped, tall hedges of American Hornbeam. A “roof” was created by four Elm trees in the plaza, which were installed in 1930 in the planting panels around the reflecting pool. These four Elms were replaced in 1936 with Sycamores along with the planting of four additional Sycamores in the panels in front of the Buchanan Memorial. Informal plantings of trees, shrubs and groundcovers bordered the enclosure along the southern terminus of the park.

Construction on the mall began in 1918 and was substantially complete five years later in 1923 when it was officially opened to the public. Although the statue of Joan of Arc was dedicated there in 1922, the great terrace was not completed and opened to the public until 1936.

From 1924 to 1927, very little construction took place in the park apart from some planting in the upper park. However, a series of design decisions were made during this period. Most of these decisions focused on the lower gardens of the park, but others included designating a play-area in the extreme northeast corner of the park, eliminating the elaborate entrance from 16th Street to the great terrace, and a reduction in scale of the W Street wall.

During the period from 1928 to 1936, construction of the lower park was completed. This included construction of the retaining wall for the great terrace and the design of water features built between 1928 and 1930. Beginning in 1930, much of the work in the park focused on the construction of the cascades, which took until 1932 to complete. Peaslee's trip to France in 1929 aided in the final preparation of plans for the cascades, along with those for the fountains and reflecting pool.

Another design consideration in 1930 was the modification of the plans for the “tempietto.” This high, round bandstand was planned for a location just north of the great terrace. However, because of the high cost and intrusive design of the tempietto, Peaslee suggested that it should be replaced with a low, permanent platform. However, neither tempietto nor platform was ever built.

By 1932, most of the structural work in the park was complete, and the cascades were flowing. Finish details and plantings took another four years to complete, and the park was finally officially opened to the public in the fall of 1936, as the first formal public park in Washington. Even at this early date, vandalism, noted during construction, was a concern. Despite the complimentary reviews of the time, Peaslee was not satisfied with the plantings, so in the years following the opening of the park, Peaslee and the Commission of Fine Arts focused their attention on the refinement of the planting and lighting.

By the early 1940's, plantings and lighting displays were at their best, and park utilization peaked. On July 8, 1941, a series of “Starlight” outdoor concerts were begun at the park, which ran through the summer of 1944. However, lack of funding for maintenance contributed to the beginning of park deterioration after World War II, continuing into the present.

Beginning in the early 1960's, Meridian Hill Park regained much of the popularity it had lost after the end of World War II. On July 4, 1963, the summer "Starlight" concert series was re-instituted along with a temporary lighting system for the cascades. In 1968 after the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. riots damaged businesses east of the park, and affected use of the park.

In 1969, one of the leaders of the Black United Front began calling the park "Malcolm X Park." Although a bill to change the name was introduced, Congress did not pass it. Since the park contains a memorial to President Buchanan, it cannot be named for any one else.

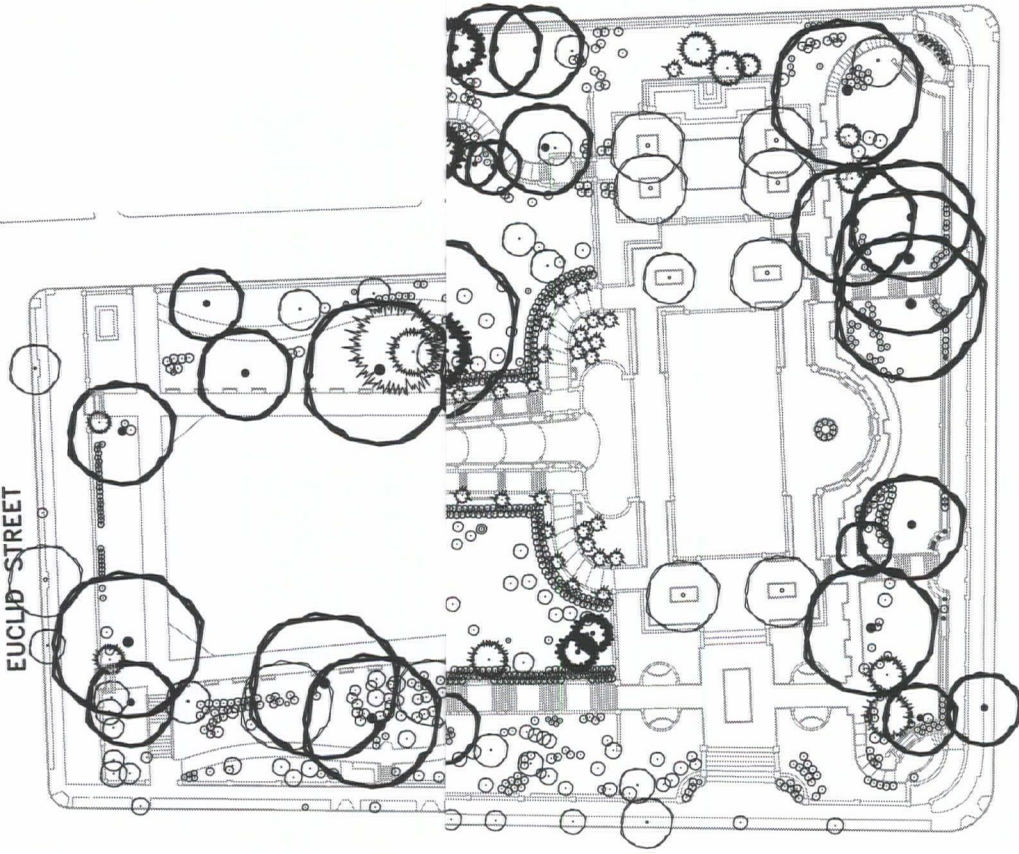
In 1974, the park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1985, a Historic American Building Survey report documented the history of the park and its existing conditions. Although the condition of the park has suffered somewhat due to decreased maintenance and sometimes inappropriate use, it has improved in recent years with the support of public-private partnerships. In 1994, the park was designated as a National Historic Landmark, providing further recognition of its national importance as a designed historic landscape.

EUCLID STREET

EUCLID STREET

W STREET

FLORIDA
AVENUE



50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN
CULTURAL LAND

DATE:
-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

**1996 EXISTING
PLAN**

(PRE-1937 TREES AND HEDGES
THAT ARE STILL PRESENT ARE INDICATED)

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 1

1.4 Management Summary

From 1910 to 1933, Meridian Hill Park was under the supervision of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, which was under “exclusive control of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army.”⁸ As with other public lands in Washington, control over the parks and open spaces had been vested in the federal government as a recognition of the importance of these resources to the entire nation.⁹ However, in matters of design and construction, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was guided by the decisions of the Commission of Fine Arts, established May 17, 1910.

In 1925 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was renamed and became the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. The office was no longer under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army, but became an independent office, responsible directly to the President of the United States.¹⁰ The first Director of this office was Lieutenant Colonel C. O. Sherrill, appointed on February 26, 1925. He was followed in office by Lieutenant Colonel Ulysses S. Grant, III, who had a major influence on the development of Meridian Hill Park.

In 1933, the office in charge of Meridian Hill Park was again moved and renamed, this time to be absorbed by the “newly designated office of National Parks, Buildings and Reservations, Department of the Interior.”¹¹ The rather cumbersome name was revised a year later to the present day “National Park Service,” with a local division of the National Capital Parks. The responsibilities of the National Capital Parks office included “the design and development of park areas, the maintenance of all areas and facilities, protection of park property and park visitors, operation of recreational facilities, [and] cooperation with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission....”¹²

The significance of these changes in official structure and ultimate authority of the office in charge of Meridian Hill Park can be seen in the process of obtaining sufficient money for the design, development and continued maintenance of the park. Under the auspices of the U.S. Army, appropriations for that office remained in the vicinity of \$700,000 from 1910 until 1921, corresponding with the years of consistent but modest appropriations for the park. From 1921 to 1924 general appropriations increased to the \$3 million range. From 1926 through 1933, while under

8 Cornelius W. Heine, *A History of National Capital Parks* (National Park Service, National Capital Parks, 1953, photocopy), p. 10.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

the auspices of the independent office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, appropriations increased to between \$6 to \$9 million a year. However, when National Capital Parks became part of the National Park Service, appropriations decreased dramatically to the \$2 million range (see figure 3). As the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, which answered directly to the President, appeals for appropriations were made directly to Congress, and were at times dependent on specific design decisions requested by members of Congress. Once under the auspices of the National Park Service, appropriations for the park became part of the overall budget of the National Capital Parks (now the National Capital Region).

In the 1930's, Meridian Hill Park was an unusual site for the National Park Service. As a formal, designed landscape, it was atypical since at that time most NPS sites were either natural landscapes or historic structures. This may have contributed to several subsequent decades of lack of appropriate stewardship of the site.

Also, the lack of funding for maintenance seen at Meridian Hill Park in the late 1940's and 1950's was not unique to that site, but rather was to be found at all NPS sites in that period due to general focusing of national priorities on defense.

Today, the park is under the management jurisdiction of the National Park Service, Rock Creek Park (ROCR).

Since the completion of the park in 1936, the National Park Service has initiated several comprehensive reports on the condition of hardscape elements such as water features, lighting, and walls, and has repaired and replaced some of these elements, including the light standards. In 1966, a study of the electrical and plumbing systems of the park was initiated, which estimated the total cost of restoring those systems at \$3 million. The engineering consultants who conducted the survey found that most of the wiring and plumbing in the park was in a state of serious disrepair, almost none of the fountain elements were working, and that the problem of vandalism in the park was very serious. According to the report, "Everywhere one finds evidence of deliberate damage....Nature has taken its toll over the years, but an irresponsible public has materially hastened the process."¹³ The report also detailed a major electrical change that occurred in 1956 when Potomac Electric Power Company revised the walkway lighting, replacing all existing lights and installing new posts and post-top lights throughout the park. The National Park Service had planned to use this report as a guide to rehabilitate the park. However, due to lack of funding, most of these recommendations were never carried out.

A 1975 status report of Meridian Hill Park, written by Ira J. Hutchison, Superintendent of National Capital Parks -East, detailed the funds spent on the park in the early 1970's and made a plea that more money be spent on the park in 1976.¹⁴ The report provided insight into the general condition of the park, and mentioned the need for extensive repairs to the fountains and lighting. The report also provided a vivid description of the criminal activity taking place in the

13 Kenneth W. Cobb, Consulting Engineers, and Youssef & Associates, Consultants for Plumbing Systems, Report of Survey and Recommendations for Rehabilitation of Electric and Plumbing Systems for Meridian Hill Park (1966), p. 19.

14 Ira J. Hutchinson, Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, to the Director, National Capital Parks, National Park Service, (memo), 10 May 1976.

Figure 3: A comparison chart of annual appropriations from 1912 to 1937 for the office responsible for the park and those funds appropriated specifically for Meridian Hill Park (Heine, Table III; HABS, p. 36).

Year	Office	General Appropriation	Appropriation for Meridian Hill Park
1912	Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds	\$659,161.58	\$490,000
1913	"	not available	25,000
1914	"	not available	25,000
1915	"	610,406.20	50,000
1916	"	579,897.03	50,000
1917	"	637,027.97	50,000
1918	"	3,283,176.75	50,000
1919	"	733,504.78	25,000
1920	"	not available	30,000
1921	"	1,015,575.46	30,000
1922	"	2,990,486.00	30,000
1923	"	3,172,565.00	25,000
1924	"	3,395,536.00	25,000
1925	Director of Public Buildings And Public Parks in the National Capital	4,179,117.00	27,440
1926	"	6,373,679.00	22,890
1927	"	6,943,436.00	23,130
1928	"	6,120,800.54	92,554
1929	"	6,553,254.00	97,612
1930	"	6,964,899.53	100,000
1931	"	9,888,598.86	130,000
1932	"	9,542,960.19	100,000
1933	Superintendent, National Capital Parks	5,853,724.60	not available
1934	"	2,161,731.00	"
1935	"	1,742,981.41	"
1936	"	3,127,624.48	145,000
1937	"	1,946,877.32	not available

park. Along with the 1966 report and the inclusion of Meridian Hill Park in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the 1975 status report was responsible for a renewed interest in the park after the post-War years of neglect.

In 1976, as part of the celebration of the Bicentennial, nearly \$60,000 was spent replacing lights, planting flowers, trimming shrubs, and fixing benches in the park. A "reopening" ceremony was held in the park in an effort to encourage community interest and awareness. By 1977 when Symphonic Fountains studied the fountain system, it was working fully again. The Symphonic Fountains 1977 drawings for work on the fountains include details for various strainers and other work that was subsequently done.¹⁵ However, the park continued to suffer from lack of funds for maintenance and substantial repair.

Several studies and reports done in 1977 proposed extensive repairs to the fountains, walls, and drainage systems of the park. However, while some minor work was accomplished, most major repair projects remained in the proposal stage due to lack of funding. Four years later in 1981, when the park was placed under the jurisdiction of Rock Creek Park, the 1977 report dealing with wall repair was revisited. At this time, according to a December, 1981 memorandum, approximately \$700,000 was allotted for rehabilitation of the park over a two-year period. Work included stabilizing the 16th Street retaining walls along the linden allee up to the great terrace, replacing the linden allee walk and some great terrace paving, replanting the linden allee, and replacing selected paving and steps along the west ascent and on the lower plaza, including the steps down to 16th Street.

In 1985, the National Capital Region sponsored the preparation of a report by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) office on the history, design development and existing conditions of Meridian Hill Park as a model project to document a significant formal designed historic landscape. The resulting HABS report was then used as a basis for lectures and professional journal articles to publicize both the importance of the park and the process for documenting it. Also in 1985 the deteriorated light standards along the mall were replaced with ones located closer to the walks to provide more light.

In June of 1987, to reduce vandalism and criminal activity, removing the restrooms in the lodge along 15th Street was proposed. By 1993, the restrooms were demolished and the lodge was converted to an open-air pavilion.

In recent years, the National Park Service has had an increased presence in the park, having expanded both police patrols and maintenance staff in the early 1990's. In late 1990, a new, comprehensive cost estimate was completed for the rehabilitation of every facet of the park, including walls, walks, drainage, irrigation, plumbing, wiring, and planting. Prepared by the National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Applied Archaeology Office, the total estimate for improvements, including design costs, was nearly \$5.5 million. Increased awareness has also prompted increased maintenance.

15 Symphonic Fountains, Inc. Fountain Specifications and Drawings, Meridian Hill Park, prepared for National Capital Parks, May 27, 1977.

In 1990 a non-profit organization called "Friends of Meridian Hill" was formed to promote public awareness of the park. The Friends group, along with Americorps, D.C. Cares, Trees for the City, and other community service organizations have assisted in park cleanups, tree planting, and have supported increased police presence in the park.

In 1994, Meridian Hill Park was designated a National Historic Landmark because of its significance as a formal historic designed landscape. As such, it is one of less than twenty historic designed landscapes out of nearly twenty three hundred National Historic Landmarks.

1.5 Methodology

A cultural landscape report presents the history and documentation of the historical features of a park or other landscape in the context of present conditions and future management recommendations. As such, cultural landscape reports are typically organized in three main parts: Part 1 includes a history of the site, documentation of the existing conditions of the site, and analysis and evaluation of the landscape's character-defining features based on National Register criteria; Part 2 contains alternatives and recommendations for landscape treatment; and Part 3 records the landscape's treatment in as-built drawings.

The primary focus of this cultural landscape report is to be found in Part 2, which will provide detailed alternatives and recommendations for future maintenance and construction work in the park. These recommendations rely on a detailed understanding of the features existing in the park, as well as the changes in design intent and expression as the park evolved in the period of 1910 to 1936, established by the National Historic Landmark nomination form as its period of significance. Comparisons of the existing features with the completed park in 1936 are critical to preparing the alternatives and recommendations for future maintenance and construction efforts. In this context, documentation of the historical development of the park relies in a large part on previously-conducted research and documentation, investigating primary sources only as they relate to design decisions involving the surface features of the hardscape and associated plant material. This document is Part 1 of the Cultural Landscape Report: the history, existing conditions, and analysis and evaluation of the site.

Within this context, between December, 1995 and February, 1998, Land Ethics staff members conducted a literature review of available secondary documents relating to Meridian Hill Park covering the period from 1910 to the present. Secondary sources include graduate theses, newspaper articles, magazine articles, and other published descriptions of the park. In addition to the secondary sources, primary sources describing the design development and construction of the surface features of the park, particularly the planting design, were researched. These primary sources were obtained from Cultural Resource Files, Rock Creek Park;¹⁶ the National Archives; Museum Resources Center (MRCE, formerly MARS), National Capital Region, National Park Service; the American Institute of Architects Library and Archives; and the Library of Congress (an exhaustive search of all of the files in the National Archives and the Library of Congress was not conducted due to budgetary constraints). Documents reviewed included maps, site photo-

16 See Steven G. Strach, "A Guide to Sources on the History of Meridian Hill Park," (Cultural Resource Files, Rock Creek Park, National Capital Region, National Park Service, 1994, photocopy). This guide contains a listing of historic plans, photographs, and correspondence relating to Meridian Hill Park contained in the National Archives, the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., and the Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Washingtoniana Collection located in Washington, D.C. Many of these documents were reviewed and, where appropriate, incorporated into the Cultural Landscape Report.

graphs, aerial photographs, letters, memoranda, meeting minutes for the Commission of Fine Arts, design sketches, construction drawings and specifications. While these sources provide the basis for the historical section of the narrative, much on-site field observation, from November of 1995 to February of 1998 was required to integrate the existing conditions with the historical site record. During these field visits, extensive photographic and map documentation was made of the existing conditions.

The physical plan for Meridian Hill Park was an on-going process of design followed by numerous revisions over a period between 1914 to 1936. Not all of the elements contained in the various designs were in fact built. As-built drawings are virtually non-existent, creating many challenges in determining what was in fact installed, particularly from the various planting designs. For this reason, to verify what was planted, research focused on examining final/approved plans for the park, Commission of Fine Arts Minutes, historic photographs, letters and memoranda, and present-day site visits. In the following text and plan sheets, plants and other park elements are only shown as constructed or planted if two sources indicate they were installed.

There is a tremendous amount of historic material detailing the funding, site procurement, and various designs of Meridian Hill Park. This material is contained in Record Group 42, Entry 310; Record Group 66, Entry 17; and Record Group 79 of the National Archives. Unfortunately, these files were not complete during the period of archival research for this project. Specifically, several of the plan and elevation drawings listed in the guide of historic sources on Meridian Hill Park compiled by Steven G. Strach as part of Record Group 79 were not found in the files of the National Archives.

Additional Research Recommendations

In researching a complex site, the more one uncovers, the more one wishes to know. Every discovery suggests other avenues of inquiry. Some questions have a clear relationship to the goals and objectives of the project; other have indirect, but nevertheless related value. However, the primary focus of the research associated with a Cultural Landscape Report is on the physical history of the site and on those aspects that are critical to its stewardship. Other types of historical information, such as social and cultural history or the history of technology, are detailed in a CLR only if they have a direct bearing on the physical development of the site. We have therefore organized the following recommendations for additional research according to whether, in our judgement, they are critical to the physical investigation of Meridian Hill Park or simply of general interest.

Critical

*Analysis and Description of Original Concrete Work
Development and Demonstration of Mixes and Techniques for Repair
Concrete*

Virtually every study or maintenance program for this park has recommended maintenance, repair, and/or restoration of the concrete constructed by John Joseph Earley. These recommendations are easier said than done, however. Earley developed a proprietary method to

achieve the effects in color, form, and exposed aggregate that we see at Meridian Hill Park today. The modern use of the term “exposed aggregate concrete” does not do justice to the specific qualities of the concrete at Meridian Hill Park. Modern exposed aggregate concrete, typically with rounded river gravel, is often not durable, since freeze/thaw cycles tend to pop the smooth gravels from the surrounding concrete. In contrast, most of the concrete at Meridian Hill Park is in extraordinarily good condition, especially considering its age.

The monolithic and incredibly complex pours at Meridian Hill are also notable. This standard of work, perhaps even the technique, is unknown today, as is Earley’s incorporation of extensive polychromy and variable aggregate sizes in his work.

Since the concrete structures of the park are a unique resource, any repairs, replication, or restorations of damaged elements must be faultless. However, for the same reason the concrete is so special, namely that it is a technique lost to modern contractors, repairing, restoring, or replacing these elements is all the more difficult.

This study has both archival and on-site demonstration components. A search must be made of all the written material available on the site, both published and not, for specific information about methods, sources of aggregate and sand, and mixes.

After a careful archival and literature search, we recommend a study process with a restoration contractor be undertaken to develop methods for working with exposed aggregate concrete that will result in reliable and consistent concrete to match that on the site. A part of this study should be to develop mixes for the various types of concrete used on the site (structural and decorative) and to identify and locate colored aggregates to match those used at Meridian Hill Park. Such a study would not just be a report, but would entail hands-on development of samples, demonstration of efficacy of recommended methods, and recording of detailed methods, materials, and sources involved in the process.

Settlement

Considering the amount of earth moved at this site during construction and the magnitude of the retaining walls, elements classically prone to failure, the intact condition of both the topography and the retaining walls at the park is quite remarkable. However, there are three major areas of significant settlement or movement of grade or structure that have been observed.

The south-east corner of the reflecting pool in the lower plaza has settled, allowing water from the pool to splash over.

The Sixteenth Street retaining wall, just north of the great terrace, was stabilized relatively recently with installation of dead-men ties, but movement there appears to be continuing.

A great deal of settlement has occurred at the great terrace, but it is not clear whether this is active or whether most occurred soon after construction.

All of these instances should be carefully surveyed to establish existing conditions and then monitored. Each of these conditions must be addressed. Remedies would be different

if they are progressive or if they are stable. Assessment and evaluation of these conditions should be included in the comprehensive concrete study.

Paving

Once again it must be emphasized that between excellent original construction and various repair projects the overall condition of paving and stairs in the park is very good. However, almost block-by-block repair of paving is necessary at locations throughout the park. Careful study will have to determine if failing paving is original or replacement. This may provide useful information for formulation of mixes as recommended above. It is recommended that spalled and deteriorated paving not be replaced until the comprehensive concrete repair and replacement investigation is complete and has determined appropriate mixes, aggregate, and techniques. Until that information is available reversible and temporary patching for stabilization and safety is recommended.

Benches

A study examining the historic slat attachment detail at the freestanding benches in the park should be made. The ingenious historic detail requires total disassembly of the whole slat attachment system to replace a single slat. Also, slats are attached to the steel strap attachment system by wood screws, less secure than NPS bench details where slats are bolted on. Both the complexity of the attachment system and the relative fragility of the screws contribute to missing slats throughout the park. The complexity of the system probably explains its abandonment altogether at some benches, where the curved configuration of the slats has been replaced with flat retro-fits. Finally, many bolts in the original attachment systems have been replaced with substitute bolts, nuts, and washers. All this suggests that an operationally more efficient attachment system, consistent with the original contoured slat design of the benches, should be developed and considered for implementation.

Trash Receptacle Containers

No drawings of the original trash receptacles for the park have been found. One historic photograph (fig. 236) shows what could be a temporary receptacle on the mall. A Record Card, Engineer Department, U.S. Army entry reports on an August 16, 1924 letter from Peaslee

“Also desires to know if we would consider making casts for trash receptacle from original instead of having model made.¹⁷ Before a new one is contemplated or designed, we recommend a final focused search be made through the documents related to the park for construction or fabrication drawings for the trash can containers.

17 Record Card. Engineer Department, U.S. Army. “Meridian Hill - Walls,” 1722.24 case 2, sheet 3.

Useful

Comprehensive Review and Inventory of Records on the Park:

There are literally thousands of pieces of paper at the National Archives about this park, covering its pre-construction, construction, and post-construction periods. Documents include correspondence, design drawings, specifications and drawings for construction of structural elements, planting plans, and clippings.

Careful review and inventory of all these records, building on the overview prepared by Stephen Strach, would allow quick retrieval of information on specific areas of interest in the future.

Social History

There are some interesting undercurrents and convergences hinted at in documents about the park worthy of further research. For example, land near the site of today's park and possibly some of the parcels acquired for the site were called "Columbia College Lands" and were apparently part of a community of African Americans. Part of this community was relocated from the park site. This relocation may have caused resentment, possibly based in race or class, and exacerbated by Mrs. Henderson's plans for 16th Street.

Later, near the end of construction of the park in correspondence about park lighting, the authors state their opposition to creating a festival atmosphere at the site and their concern about attracting undesirable elements to the park, specifically identified in one letter as "colored."¹⁸ Different perceptions of the park as an important national site and as a neighborhood park were apparent at that time.

18 See letters in Appendix 4.

2. History of the Park

2.1 Prologue

Meridian Hill Park is located in the city of Washington, D.C., which was approved by Congress as the site of the new capital of the US in 1790. Washington was established at the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and included the existing port cities of Alexandria, Virginia and Georgetown, Maryland. The plan for the city designed by Pierre L'Enfant in 1791 took into consideration existing topography and natural elements. As a result, the city was located below the fall line of the separation between two distinct geologic regions - the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain - and the northern limit of the city followed Boundary Street, now Florida Avenue, along the base of this fall line. This separation can be seen in the vicinity of 16th Street, NW at Meridian Hill Park where the Great Terrace Overlook was designed to take advantage of the sharp grade change of this geologic transition.

Establishing A Meridian for the United States

Commodore David Porter is generally credited with first using the name "Meridian Hill" to describe the 157 acre farm, located just above the historic boundary of the L'Enfant plan, that he purchased in 1816. He named the site Meridian Hill because he believed that it was the location where the "central meridian of the District [of Columbia] passed."¹

The necessity for a meridian for the new American nation "for navigational purposes, map making, and scientific work was recognized during the earliest years of the republic, when it was still necessary to make base calculations on celestial measurements taken from the established meridian at Greenwich, England."² The location of the first meridian can be found on the 1792 rendition of the L'Enfant Plan for the Capital City drawn by surveyor Andrew Ellicott, which established a longitude line at the Capitol Building. By 1804, however, the surveyor for the District of Columbia, Nicholas King, reported that the first meridian for the United States in fact intersected the very center of the north/south basement doors of the President's house, having been established at Virginia Avenue in September of 1793.³ In December of 1804, a pier, also referred to as the Jefferson Obelisk, was constructed near the White House to mark the Meridian. However, it was not only used for a bench-mark, but also as a guy-post for barges to tie-off,

1 Charles O. Paullin, Washington the Old Navy, Columbia Historical Society Records 33-34:176, as cited in HABS, p. 5.

2 HABS, p. 4.

3 John Stewart, "Early Maps and Surveyors of the City of Washington, D.C.," Columbia Historical Society Records 33-34:176, as cited in HABS, p.4.

causing its early demise.⁴

Early Residents of Meridian Hill

The ownership of the Meridian Hill Park site can be traced back to 1811, when Robert Peter of Georgetown willed to his son a piece of property that was then called Mount Pleasant or Peter Hill. Peter's son sold his inheritance to Washington Bowie, who then sold the land to Commodore David Porter in 1816 for \$13,000.⁵ Porter reputedly commissioned George Hadfield to build a mansion on the property, requesting that "the entrance door...was directly north of the center door of the President's House. On the edge of the south lawn, in close proximity to the house,...[he] placed the meridian stone."⁶ Today, a bronze tablet located at the main entrance to Meridian Hill Park references Porter's stone which was removed when 16th Street was extended. At that time the stone was relocated to the southwest corner of 14th and R Streets to be used as a carriage step, although today the whereabouts of the original meridian stone is unknown.⁷

Although he was regarded as a talented navigator, Porter's skills as a farmer were poor. By 1829, deeply in debt, the Commodore mortgaged the property to Commander John Rodgers. In 1829 the mansion and grounds were leased by former President John Quincy Adams, and in 1830 the lands were deeded to Phillip Landscape for life with a remainder to Eliza Cox.⁸

Although there is no known photograph of the house, a detailed description of the building appeared in the *National Intelligencer* from 1847, indicating that the location was called "Meridian Hill" from the monument on the grounds that marked the proposed United States meridian. The house was said to have been constructed of brick, stuccoed, and 90 feet wide and 54 feet deep. The building was 1½ stories tall with a portico of 54 feet by 12 feet.⁹ The 1861 Topographical Map of the District of Columbia by Boschke illustrates the location of the structure on Meridian Hill (see figures 4 and 5), which was by then owned by a Colonel Thompson.

The Civil War Era

During the Civil War, The Union Army cleared Meridian Hill to establish a temporary camp known as Camp Cameron for various Union regiments. Among them were infantry from New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Vermont, Massachusetts, and the 8th Illinois Cavalry. Contrary to impressions created in twentieth-century accounts, the all black 54th Massachusetts Regiment

4 *Ibid.*, p.70 as cited in HABS, p.5.

5 Paullin, Records, 33-34:176, as cited in Jean Fulton, "A Chronology of the Development of Meridian Hill Park," (1 May, 1991, photocopy), p. 9; John Claggett Proctor, "Meridian Hill Once a Farm Tilled By Nautical Hero," *The Sunday Star* (Washington), 28 July 1935, p.F-2.

6 John Claggett Proctor, "Commander Porter was a Dirt Farmer in Meridian Hill," *The Sunday Star*, 3 September 1928, as cited in HABS, p.5.

7 Proctor, *Sunday Star*, 30 September 1928, as cited in HABS, p. 6.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

Figure 4: A portion of the 1861 Topographical Map of the District of Columbia by A. Boschke (Library of Congress). Note that after sixty years, the city of Washington was still very much contained within the boundaries of the L'Enfant Plan. Such was not the case fifty years later when acquisition for Meridian Hill Park was begun.

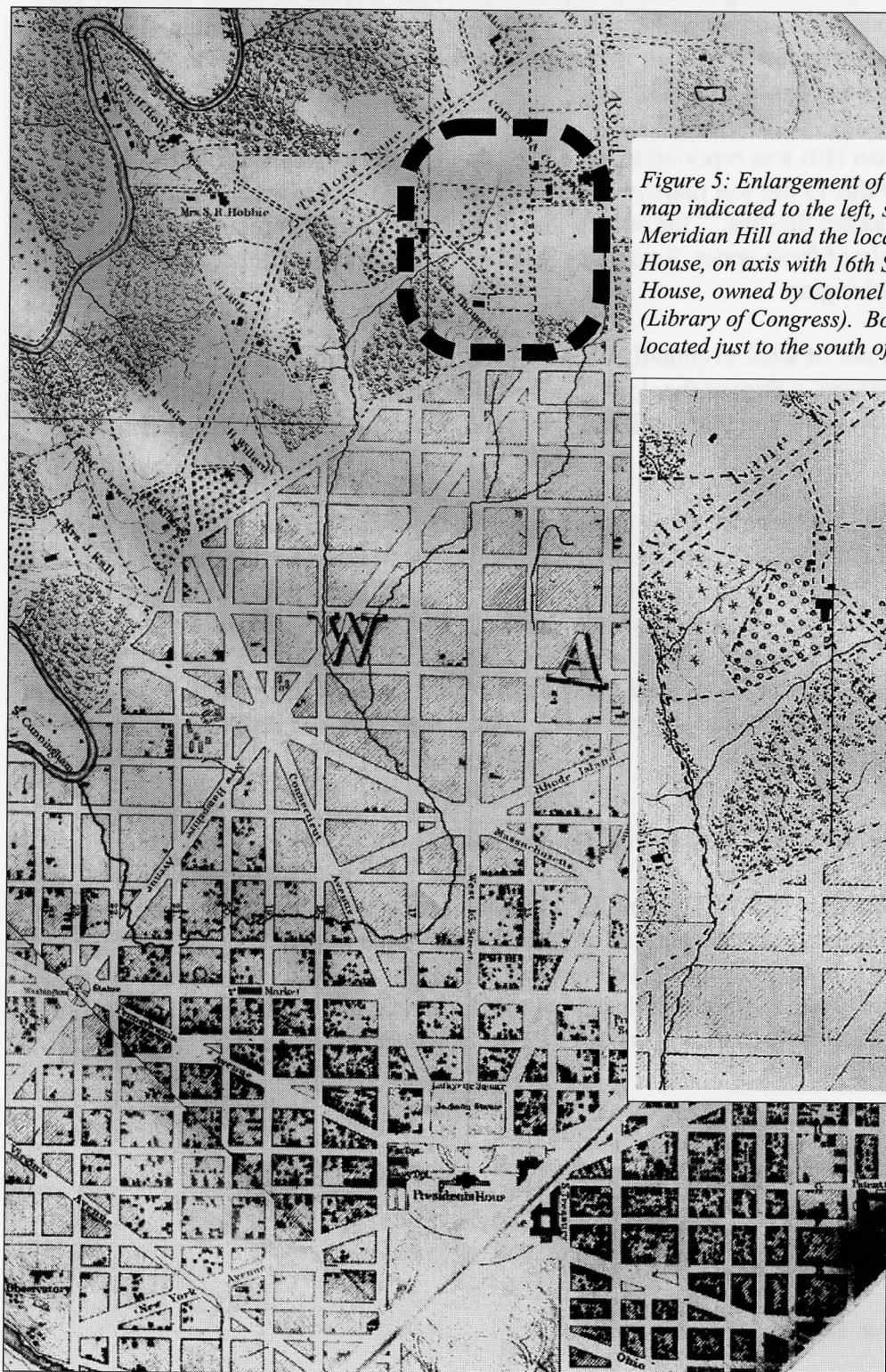
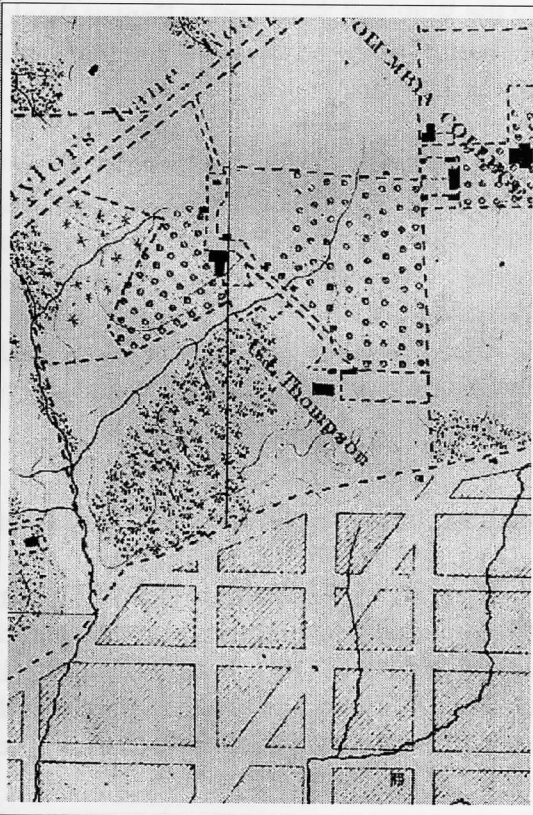


Figure 5: Enlargement of section of the Boschke map indicated to the left, showing the site of Meridian Hill and the location of the Porter House, on axis with 16th Street and the White House, owned by Colonel Thompson in 1861 (Library of Congress). Boundary Avenue, located just to the south of the Thompson



commanded by Colonel Robert Shaw was not stationed on Meridian Hill.¹⁰

The Union army also established a hospital in the Porter Mansion on Meridian Hill. At that time, Union Army Surgeon George T. Stevens described Porter's estate as being elegantly landscaped with box (wood) and juniper and adjoining groves of oak and chestnut trees. There were a total of five groves, intersected by fresh water streams and well-cultivated fields that extended northward. The mansion burned in 1863.¹¹

Although Meridian Hill was reported to have been an unhealthy place for soldiers during the Civil War, primarily due to the wet marshy conditions of the land that extended south of Florida Avenue, referred to as the Slashes,¹² the stream that entered the property from the northeast provided an ample supply of fresh water. Known as Slash Run, it was at that time one of the largest water courses in Washington.

The northeast corner of what eventually became Meridian Hill Park was purchased in 1865 by the Wayland Seminary, a Baptist theological school for African Americans. Although razed at the turn of the century, the seminary building sat at the corner of 15th and Chapin Streets for nearly 35 years.¹³

In the early 1880's, Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, a.k.a. Joaquin Miller, the "poet of the Sierras" lived in the vicinity of Meridian Hill in a log cabin that he constructed (see figure 6).¹⁴ Miller was well known not only for his poetry, but also as a lawyer, a judge, a journalist, and world traveler. By 1887, Miller moved to the less populated city of Oakland, California and the cabin was sold to Henry White, who later sold it to Richard Dubois for \$5,100.¹⁵ By June of 1887, A. A. Adey, Assistant Secretary of State, used the cabin for his residence. On behalf of the California State Association, the cabin was later moved to Rock Creek Park and dedicated there in 1912.

Senator John Henderson and Mary Foote Henderson

Up until 1887, Meridian Hill still resembled a less-than-successful farm. With corn furrows still discernible and utilities non-existent, the site lent little to the image of the Capital City of the United States. In 1887, former Senator John Henderson and his wife Mary returned to Washington from Missouri and began to purchase dozens of lots that were situated in new subdivisions north of Boundary Street (now Florida Avenue).¹⁶ For their own residence, the Hendersons con-

10 *Ibid*; communication with R. Harvey, Rock Creek Park.

11 Proctor, *Sunday Star*, 28 July 1935, p. F-2.

12 *Ibid*.

13 HABS, p. 12.

14 Proctor, *Sunday Star*, 28 July 1935, p. F-2.

15 *Ibid*.

16 Meridian House International, *Washington Renaissance: Architecture and Landscape of Meridian Hill* (Washington, D.C.:Meridian House International, 1989), p. 1.



Figure 6: Drawing of Joaquín Miller log cabin at Meridian Hill, c. 1885 (Collection, Columbia Historical Society, as reproduced in Meridian House International, 1989).

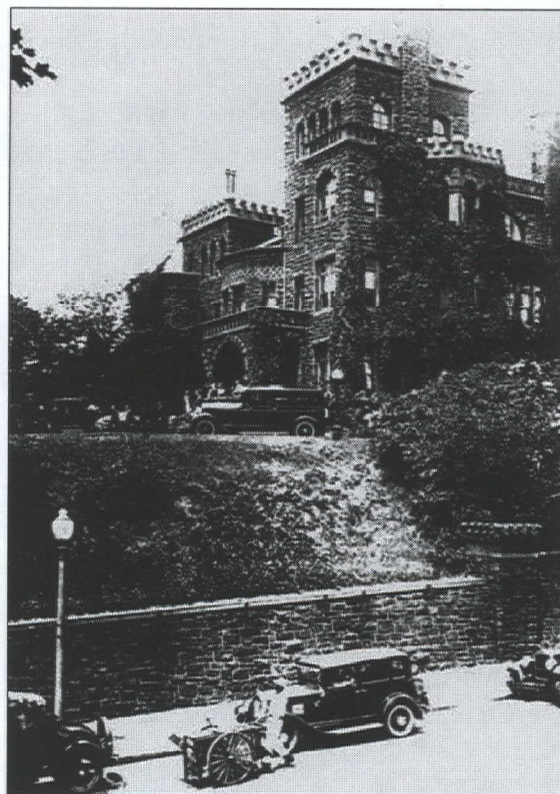


Figure 7: Henderson Castle, looking west across 16th Street from park site. The sand-stone wall around the site at street level is all that remains of the castle today (Meridian House International, 1989).

structed what became known as the Henderson Castle, completed in 1888¹⁷, located at the North West corner of 16th Street and Florida Avenue (see figure 7). This huge, red sandstone, turreted structure was noted for its commanding views of Washington and the Potomac River. Today only the original retaining walls around the site remain.

Mrs. Henderson's plans for 16th Street were not confined to her own real estate activities. She personally championed numerous civic improvement projects before Congress; projects that she felt would add both to the beauty of the Capital and her Meridian Hill neighborhood, while simultaneously providing needed civic amenities. Many of these projects are described in detail in the history section of this report during the years 1910 - 1916. Mary Henderson is credited with fostering the transition of Meridian Hill into a residential neighborhood of foreign embassies, the first of which accommodated the French ambassador Jules Jusserand, who arrived in Washington in 1902.

17 Henry Mitchell, "Meridian Hill: Gentility Captured in Concrete," *Washington Post*, no date.

The City Beautiful Movement and the McMillan Report

The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 is generally credited with popularizing the City Beautiful Movement of the early 1890's. This movement, coupled with the pending celebration in 1900 of the centennial of the establishment of Washington, D.C. as the permanent seat of the federal government, prompted a renewed interest in the overall design of Washington. On February 12, 1890, architect Franklin W. Smith proposed the construction of a colossal presidential Mansion on Meridian Hill. Believing that the existing White House was too small and should be preserved as a memorial, Mrs. Henderson retained architect Paul Pelz, co-designer of the Library of Congress, to design a new Executive Mansion in 1890.¹⁸

The Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, chaired by Senator James McMillan of Michigan, appointed a Senate Park Commission in 1901. Also known as the McMillan Commission, its mission was to study plans and make recommendations for the development and improvement of the park system for the District of Columbia. Commission members included Daniel Burnham, Charles McKim, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, all prominent figures in the development of Chicago's Columbian Exposition. Also included on the Commission was Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., son of noted Landscape Architect and Columbian Exposition designer Olmsted Sr., and Charles Moore, who acted as Commission secretary. The Commission recommended adherence to the general principles of the L'Enfant plan, while also expanding design elements into areas of the city beyond the original L'Enfant plan area.¹⁹

The original concept for placing a park on Meridian Hill can be traced to the recommendations of the McMillan Commission.²⁰ Specifically, the Commission recommended the purchase of specified parcels of privately owned land in the City of Washington for future park sites. The group of vacant lots owned by Mary Henderson, between 15th and 16th Streets, and across the street from the Henderson Castle, were included in the list of recommended parcels for future park sites (see figure 8).²¹ A report concerning Meridian Hill from the Office of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, dated March 17th, 1908, recommends that "there is no other site [Meridian Hill] in the District as suitable for a government reservation."²²

Mrs. Henderson continued to lobby Congress, urging them to take action on the recommendations of the Senate Park Commission-McMillan Plan of 1902 and acquire land for the construction of a park on Meridian Hill. Legislation was passed on May 20th, 1910 and the acquisition of the land from Mrs. Henderson for a park on Meridian Hill was completed in September of 1912.²³

18 Thomas W. Dolan, "Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C." Graduate Thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, May 1983), p. 8.

19 HABS, p. 11.

20 Dolan, *Meridian Hill Park*, p. 9.

21 *Ibid*, p. 9.

22 Senate, *Report Number 725 to Accompany Bill Number 7725, 20 May 1910*, as cited in Dolan, *Meridian Hill Park*, p. 9.

23 *Ibid*, p. 56.

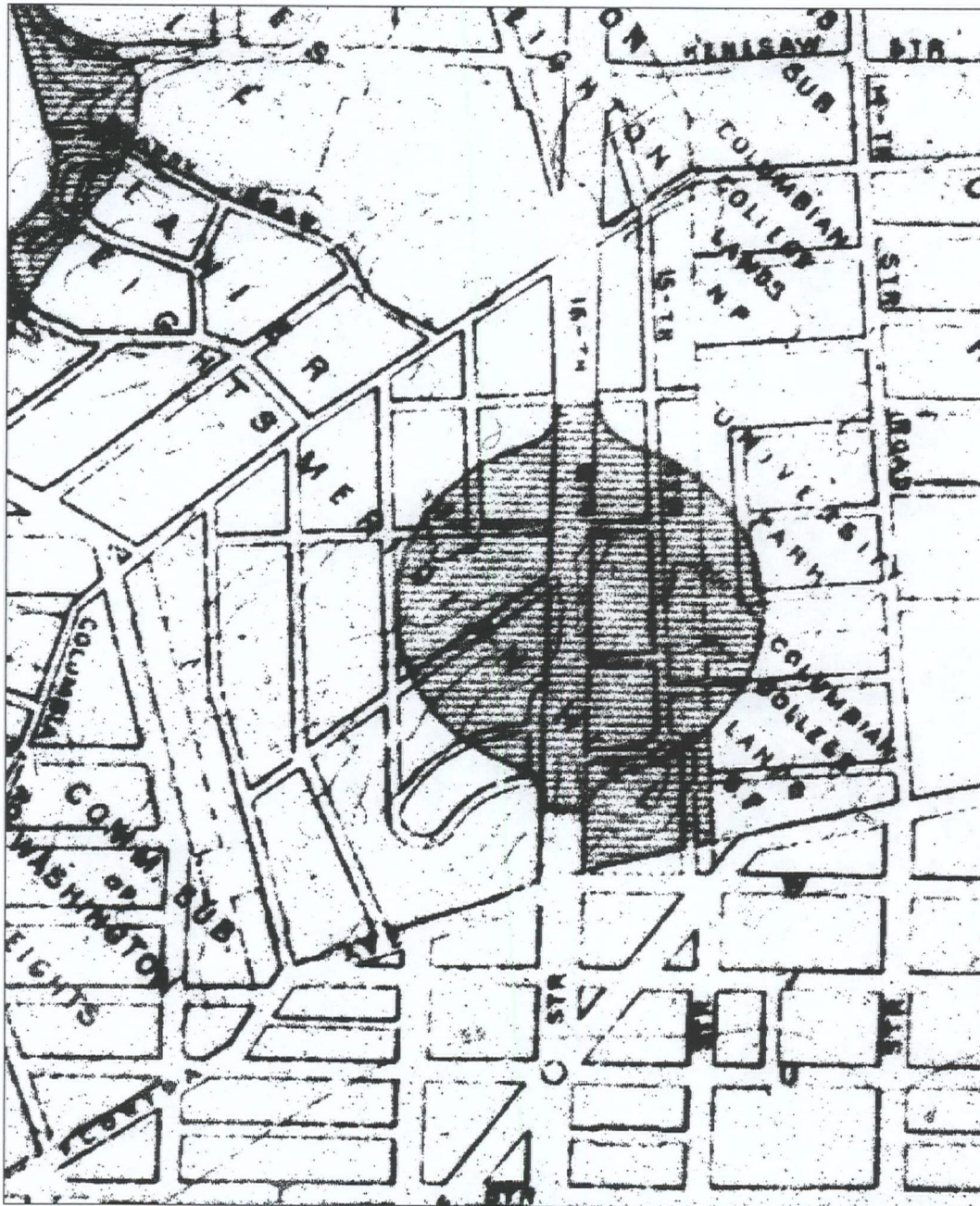


Figure 8: Portion of "Map of the District of Columbia Showing Areas Recommended to be Taken as Necessary for New Parks and Park Connections" D-288, November, 1901; cross hatching indicates areas, including present day Meridian Hill Park, recommended for purchase. 16th Street runs through the center of the hatched area, W Street borders the lower end of the hatched area, and north is to the top (Senate Report No. 166 on "The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia" 1902, a.k.a. McMillan Commission Report (microfiche) Library of Congress # G 3851 G52 1901 I 3). By 1901, the city had grown beyond the original L'Enfant plan boundary. The need for the McMillan Commission to try to re-establish the L'Enfant design is clearly visible in this figure where L'Enfant's grid and radials have not been extended beyond Boundary Street/Florida Avenue. This map shows the McMillan Commission's desire to continue the axiality of the L'Enfant plan. But, realities of property development and acquisition pushed the final site of the park off its axis and into a conceptually much less elegant final configuration of a elongated parcel of land along the side of 16th Street.

2.2 1910 - 1916

The period from 1910 through 1916 marks the true beginning of Meridian Hill Park, for it is the period during which the federal government acquired the land, approved the initial plans, and began preparation and construction of the park site. However, before the park could be developed, several key events took place in Washington. One of these events was the creation of the United States Commission of Fine Arts on May 17, 1910. The Commission of Fine Arts was created to "...meet the growing need for a permanent body to advise the government on matters pertaining to the arts; and particularly, to guide the architectural development of Washington so that the capital city would reflect, in stateliness and grandeur, the United States as a world power."¹ Architect Daniel Burnham was appointed the Commission's first chair. Other members included Landscape Architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Charles Moore. These three men, who also served on the influential McMillan Commission that shaped the form of the City of Washington in its second century, provided continuity from the McMillan Commission's grand schemes to the actual incremental implementation of them.²

The duty of the Commission of Fine Arts was to oversee the implementation of the McMillan Report, on which little action had been taken. The McMillan Report, "recommended adherence to the principals of the L'Enfant Plan of 1791. It also recommended an extensive coordinated park system for the District of Columbia."³ One of the first recommendations of the Commission of Fine Arts was that the U.S. Government purchase the lots on the Meridian Hill site (see figure 9).

The land for the park was designated for acquisition on June 25, 1910, under Section 36 of the Public Buildings Act, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the land by purchase or condemnation for the purpose of providing a reservation for a public park.⁴ The Act also provided that the acquired land would become part of the park system of the District of Columbia and be under the control of the Chief of Engineers of the United States Army. The General Deficiency Act, approved March 14, 1911, appropriated the \$490,000 used to purchase the 11.42 acres of land. The park area was composed of a number of parcels, a portion of which was owned by Mary Henderson who had originally paid \$130,000 for it.⁵ Acquisition of the final parcels was completed by September 1912 (see figures 10, 11 and 12).⁶

1 HABS, p. 12.

2 *Ibid.* Charles Moore was secretary to the McMillan Commission and later Chairman of the CFA, 1915-37.

3 Sue A. Kohler, Historian of the Commission, *The Commission of Fine Arts, A Brief History 1910-1995*. The Commission of Fine Arts, The Pension Building, Washington, D.C.

4 Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1913.

5 HABS, p. 36; Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, Meridian Hill Park, for 1917.

6 *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1913*.

Although a park design was not developed until 1913, several important proposals were advanced in the years immediately following the acquisition of the Meridian Hill property. The Lincoln Memorial Commission was formed in 1911 to plan and execute a suitable memorial to Abraham Lincoln. Primarily due to Mary Henderson's persistent lobbying efforts, Meridian Hill was designated as a possible site for the memorial. The Lincoln Memorial Commission invited John Russell Pope—who was designing the Temple of the Scottish Rite and the Lincoln Birthplace memorial—to prepare designs for this new memorial.⁷

Architect Henry Bacon was also preparing designs for Lincoln's memorial. In fact, Bacon had originally been appointed sole designer of the memorial, before the selection process was opened up to include Pope. Because Bacon was the preferred architect, Pope was asked to submit designs for two alternative memorial sites: the Soldier's Home Grounds and Meridian Hill. Bacon, on the other hand, was to design a memorial to Lincoln for a location at the Potomac River end of the extension of the east/west axis of the Mall from the Washington Monument.⁸

By late 1911, Pope had developed a design for the memorial at Meridian Hill. The design followed the guidelines of both the McMillan Commission and Mrs. Henderson, making Sixteenth Street a "monumental avenue." Based on the ancient Temple of Neptune at Paestum, Pope proposed a monument raised on a high plinth that carried the structure up to the height of the columns on the Capitol dome.⁹ The monument was to be in a park 750 feet by 1200 feet, on the crest and the slope of Meridian Hill, which would have required the elimination of a plan to build the French Embassy on Euclid Street. In addition, Pope planned to divert 16th Street around the park and place the memorial in the center of the Sixteenth Street axis. To reach the monument, Pope proposed a 100 foot wide staircase that led from an open plaza to a platform 250 feet above the level of the Potomac River, creating a monument that would have truly dominated the Washington skyline. Although Pope's design was much praised when it was presented to the public in late 1911, it was ultimately rejected by the Commission of Fine Arts because the strength and size of the structure did not fit in with the residential nature of its surroundings. In addition, the Commission recognized that the area around the proposed monument would soon be a busy one, and was already occupied by many different styles of architecture. "Located on Meridian Hill, the

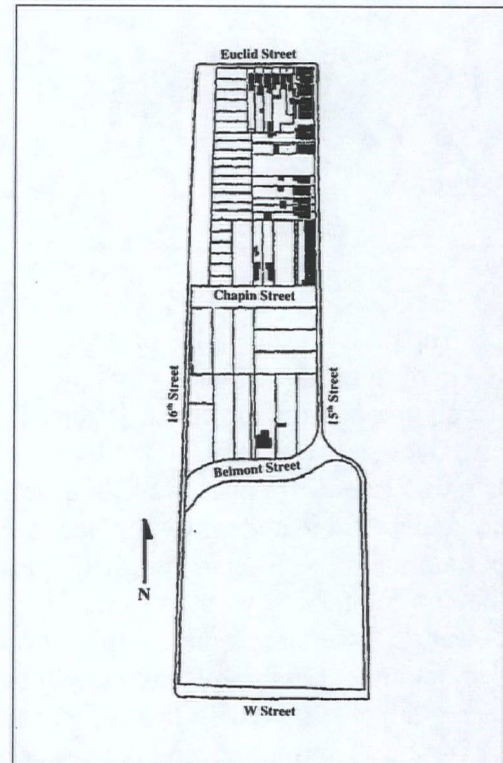


Figure 9: The existing structures and parcels which composed the Meridian Hill site prior to the development of the park (HABS, sheet 4, 1985). Note the undeveloped Henderson parcel located to the north of W Street.

7 *Washington Renaissance: Architecture and Landscape Architecture of Meridian Hill* (Washington, D.C.: Meridian House International, 1989), p. 26.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

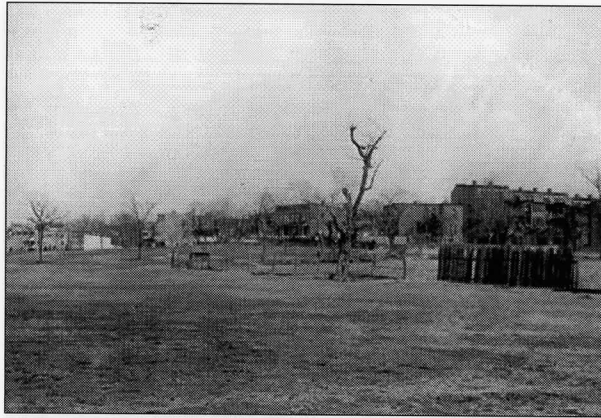


Figure 10: View of the site before development (RCP-CRF, no date).



Figure 11: View of upper level of site before development, looking north along 16th Street. Future park site is in foreground. (RCP-CRF, no date).

Lincoln Memorial would lack that isolation which [sic] is an essential element in the site of a great monument.”¹⁰

After the Commission’s rejection of Pope’s design for the Lincoln Memorial at the Meridian Hill site, Mrs. Henderson petitioned Congress in 1912 with another Lincoln Memorial design for the Meridian Hill site, which she commissioned Frederick V. Murphy and W. B. Olmsted to prepare.¹¹ While this proposal was also rejected by the Commission of Fine Arts, it is interesting to note that the design incorporated a 100-foot-wide set of steps leading up to the memorial, flanked on either side by cascades, each of which originated from a fountain on the plaza. Although rejected in this instance, the cascade concept would later become integral to George Burnap’s design for Meridian Hill Park.



Figure 12: View of 15th Street fronting Meridian Hill Park before development; future park site to left, (RCP-CRF, no date).

After the rejection of Meridian Hill as a site for the Lincoln Memorial in late 1912, the Commission of Fine Arts officially recommended that Meridian Hill should be made into a public park consistent with the McMillan Commission’s original recommendation.¹² The site, as acquired, was off-axis with 16th Street, necessitating compromising the axuality originally implied. Furthermore, the irregular shape of the site would inevitably impose design challenges to those designing a formal axial park for the site.

10 Edward F. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1927), pp. 20-21, as cited in Dolan, p. 11.

11 Dolan, p. 11.

12 *Ibid.* p. 12.

In 1912, George Burnap, landscape architect for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, was chosen to prepare the design for the park. In the same year, Horace Peaslee, who would later become the primary architect for Meridian Hill Park, was appointed to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds as landscape designer.¹³

On November 13, 1912, the Chief of Engineers granted authority for the removal of the buildings on the property, which fronted along 15th and Euclid Streets.¹⁴ The work of tearing down the buildings began on the 18th of November, continued through December, and was completed in January of 1913.¹⁵ The work of cleaning up the grounds was completed in February. When the park property was acquired by the U.S. Government, many of the buildings were occupied by tenants, most of whom then paid rentals to the Chief of Engineers Office until the time they were evicted.¹⁶ While clearing the land for the park in 1912, it also became necessary to move the log cabin that was once occupied by Joaquin Miller.¹⁷ The cabin was moved by the California State Association to a site along Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park, where it stands today.

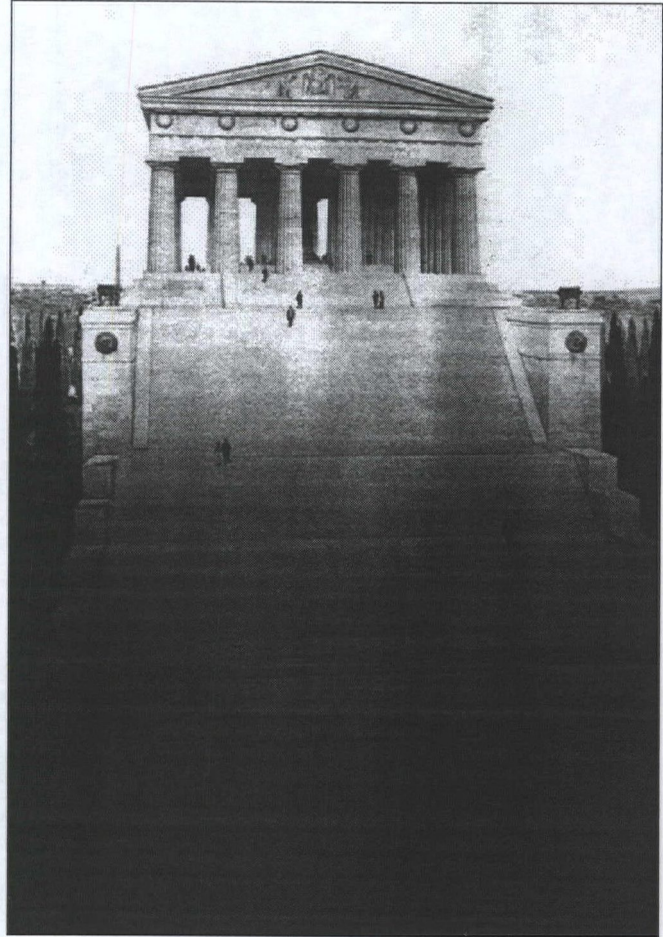


Figure 13: Drawing of proposed Lincoln Memorial on Meridian Hill by John Russell Pope. View is looking south, with Washington Monument visible in the background to the left of memorial (from 1989 Meridian House International Exhibit Catalog).

In April 1913, George Burnap of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds brought a proposed design for Meridian Hill Park before the Commission of Fine Arts. The Commission concurred that the park should be designed for use as “a general congregation point, attracting large numbers of visitors from all over the city....”¹⁸ The design would incorporate “open plazas and easy circulation, accessibility, a music concourse..., and an auto entrance with provisions for parking motors.”¹⁹ The Commission felt that “to design the park as a neighborhood recreation ground, the design for which would embrace large open lawns, informal walks, etc, would not be

13 HABS, p.14

14 *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1913.*

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

17 Cultural Resources Files, Rock Creek Park..

18 Minutes of the Commission of Fine Arts, 4 April 1913, hereinafter cited as CFA Minutes.

19 *Ibid.*

advisable, as the location and view to be obtained of the city will give the park a wide interest....”²⁰ The Commission pointed out that because there could be no axial relationship between the Washington Monument and the park, the view of the monument should not be considered the dominating element of the park. They also advised Burnap that the site, with its sharp grades, suggested a formal architectural design, but that for reasons of economy, running water should not be used in “large quantities.”²¹

An April 9th, 1913 revised plan for the northern portion of the upper mall shows the proposed auto entrance with double, “folding” gates and a path system to either side of the auto route and parking areas. The plan and Euclid Street elevation are reproduced in figures 14 and 15.

In May 1913, the Commission reviewed a second sketch of the proposed plan for Meridian Hill Park, and was satisfied that further development of the plans could be left in Burnap’s hands.²² Burnap again met with the Commission in September and November to show them updated sketches and plans for the park. It was during the September meeting that the Commission suggested that the design be revised to include a statue of President Buchanan in the lower garden, at the southern termination of the main axis of the park. Convinced that this was the best site for the proposed memorial to Buchanan, the Commission directed the Secretary to inform the executor of Harriet Lane Johnston’s estate (Buchanan’s niece) that the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was at work studying how the site could be best utilized for the purpose of a memorial to her uncle.²³

The 1913 Report of the Chief Engineers provides the first indication of the funding problems that were to plague the development of the park throughout its history. The report states that “\$25,000 for commencing the improvement of this park and for its care and maintenance” was requested, but only \$2,500 was appropriated.²⁴ These funds were used for the preparation of plans for the park. On June 23, 1913, a sundry civil act for the fiscal year was approved. This act appropriated funds for the further refinement of the design for the park, including: 1) a plan; 2) an elevation of the Sixteenth Street side of the park; 3) sectional drawings through the upper part of the park, showing the fountains and the character of tree growth; 4) a drawing showing promenade, terrace walls, steps, trees, and waterfall; 5) perspective drawings; 6) renderings; and 7) a clay model of the entire park.²⁵

While preliminary designs for Meridian Hill Park were going back and forth between the Commission of Fine Arts and the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Mrs. Henderson was busy undertaking what was to be her most famous crusade. She lobbied and actually succeeded in having legislation passed in 1913 that changed the name of 16th Street to “Avenue of the Presidents.” However, because her proposal to line 16th Street with busts of all the Presidents and

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*

22 CFA Minutes, 9 May 1913.

23 CFA Minutes, 25 September 1913.

24 Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1913.

25 *Ibid.*

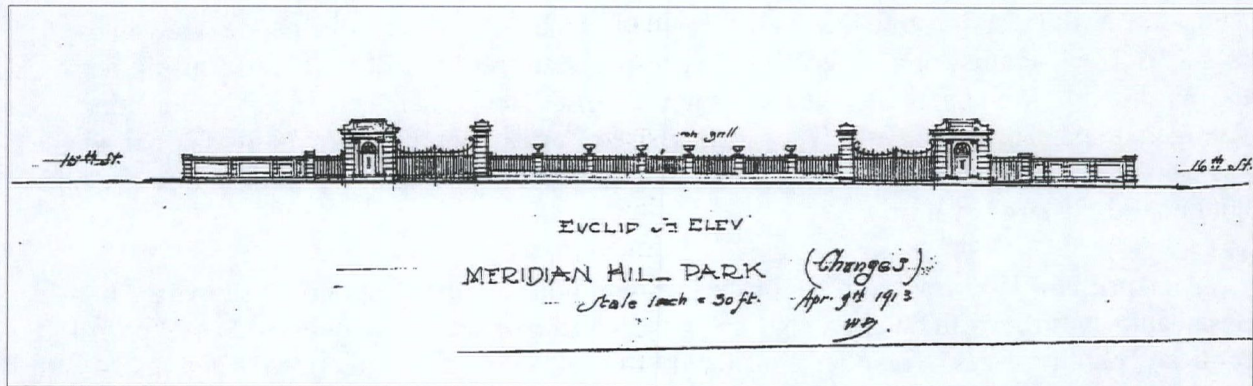


Figure 14: 1913 elevation of the proposed Euclid Street entrance to Meridian Hill Park (National Archives RG 79, 327.46A).

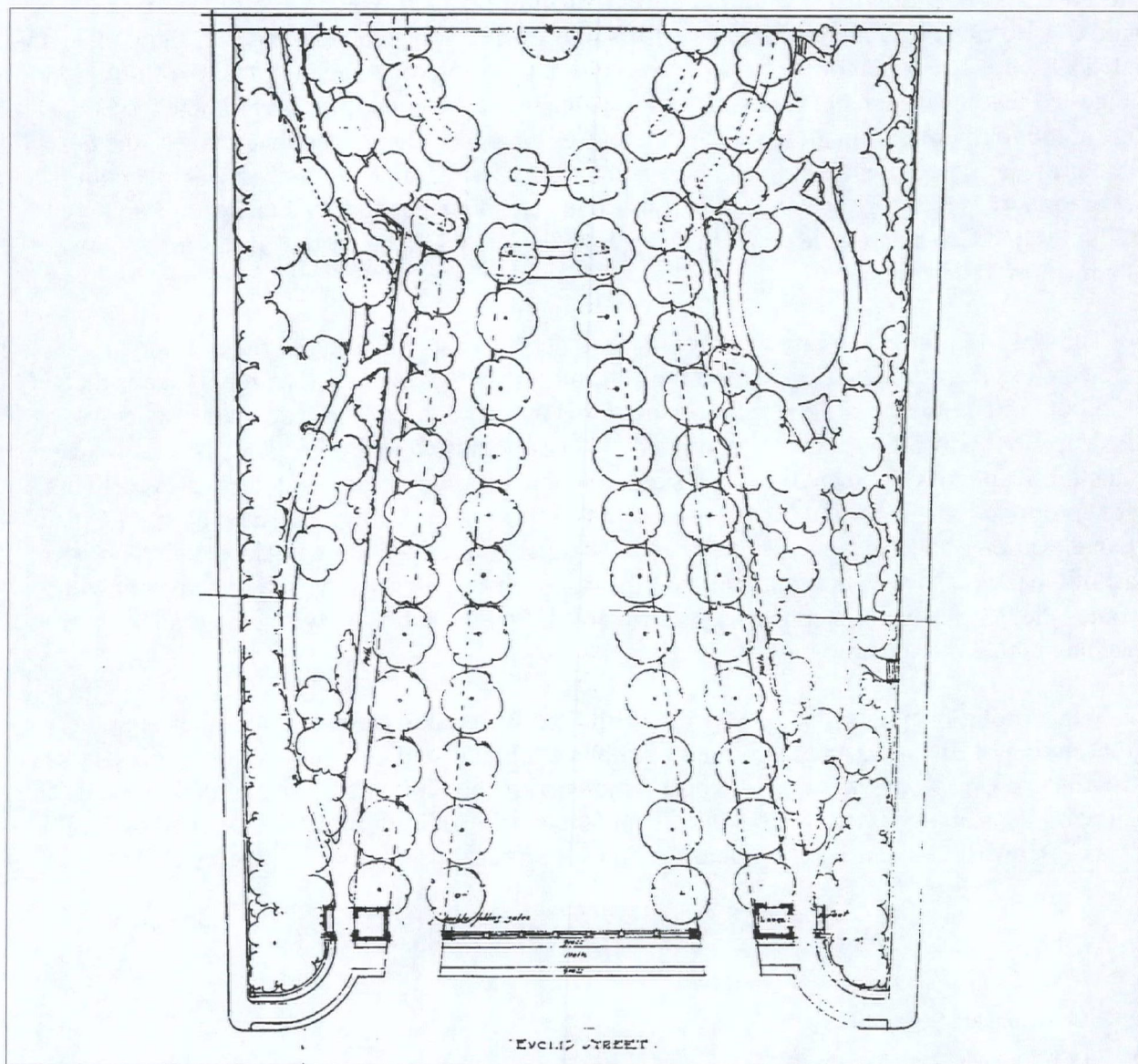


Figure 15: 1913 proposed plan for the northern portion of the mall (National Archives RG 79, 327.46A). Note that this 1913 plan, as prepared, orients north at the bottom of the drawing with 15th Street on the left side and 16th Street on the right side.

Vice Presidents was denied by the Commission of Fine Arts, and because the name was unpopular to begin with, the original 16th Street name was restored in 1914.²⁶

In the design of Meridian Hill Park, 1914 was a particularly important year. George Burnap, Horace Peaslee, and the other landscape architects and designers in the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds continued to work on preliminary designs for the park, submitting these designs to the Commission of Fine Arts several times for comments.²⁷ As part of the design process, Burnap, Peaslee, and members of the Commission traveled that year to France, Spain, Switzerland, and most importantly, Italy to study the European gardens that were the inspiration for the Meridian Hill design concept. While in Europe, Peaslee sketched and photographed cascades, great retaining walls, obelisks, urns, and masonry seats that would serve as sources for the park design. Peaslee also collected a large number of postcards that he used as references.²⁸

Between 1912 and 1914, a total of \$52,500 was spent on the development of a design for the park. In March of 1914, The Commission of Fine Arts gave approval of the preliminary design to the Burnap plan for Meridian Hill, and advised the Officer in Charge of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds that the general design could be presented to Congress (figure 16 shows the plan that was published in the *Washington Star* about this time). The designs and plans were thereupon approved as preliminary designs, subject to further study and resubmission to the Commission.²⁹ As part of the approved design, the lower part of the park was to include a monument to President Buchanan that would be donated to the U.S. Government by the estate of Harriet Lane Johnston, President Buchanan's niece. Mr. J. Lawrason Riggs of Baltimore, the Executor of Ms. Johnston's estate, was invited to inspect the designs for the park and for the memorial.³⁰

With the 1914 drawings already based on Italian design concepts, it is thought that the trip to Europe was merely intended to iron out details of the Burnap plan.³¹ The version of the 1914 plan, illustrated in figure 16, features an upper park of baroque design, which included a fountain within a formal garden, drives for open carriages, and a concert pavilion. The two carriage drives entered from Euclid Street at the north end of the park, continued along the main axis of the site, and terminated at a circular parking area in the center of the upper park. Between the two driveways was a triangular-shaped, open, grassy mall. Trees lined the sides of the driveways and the circular parking area, and meandering paths cut through informal gardens on both the east and west sides of the drives. From the parking area, steps led on all sides to a formal garden, intersected by two parallel paths running north-south along the main axis of the park. These paths, in turn, connected to a formal octagonal concert garden. The plantings of the concert garden were divided into eight equal sections, and were arranged around a central fountain. To the west of the concert garden, a straight, tree-lined allee connected a northern 16th Street entrance

26 *Washington Renaissance: Architecture and Landscape Architecture of Meridian Hill*. Meridian House International, Washington, D.C., 1989. p. 5.

27 CFA Minutes, 23 January 1914; 20 March 1914.

28 Dolan, p. 31.

29 CFA Minutes, 20 March 1914.

30 CFA Minutes, 25 September 1913.

31 HABS, p. 18.

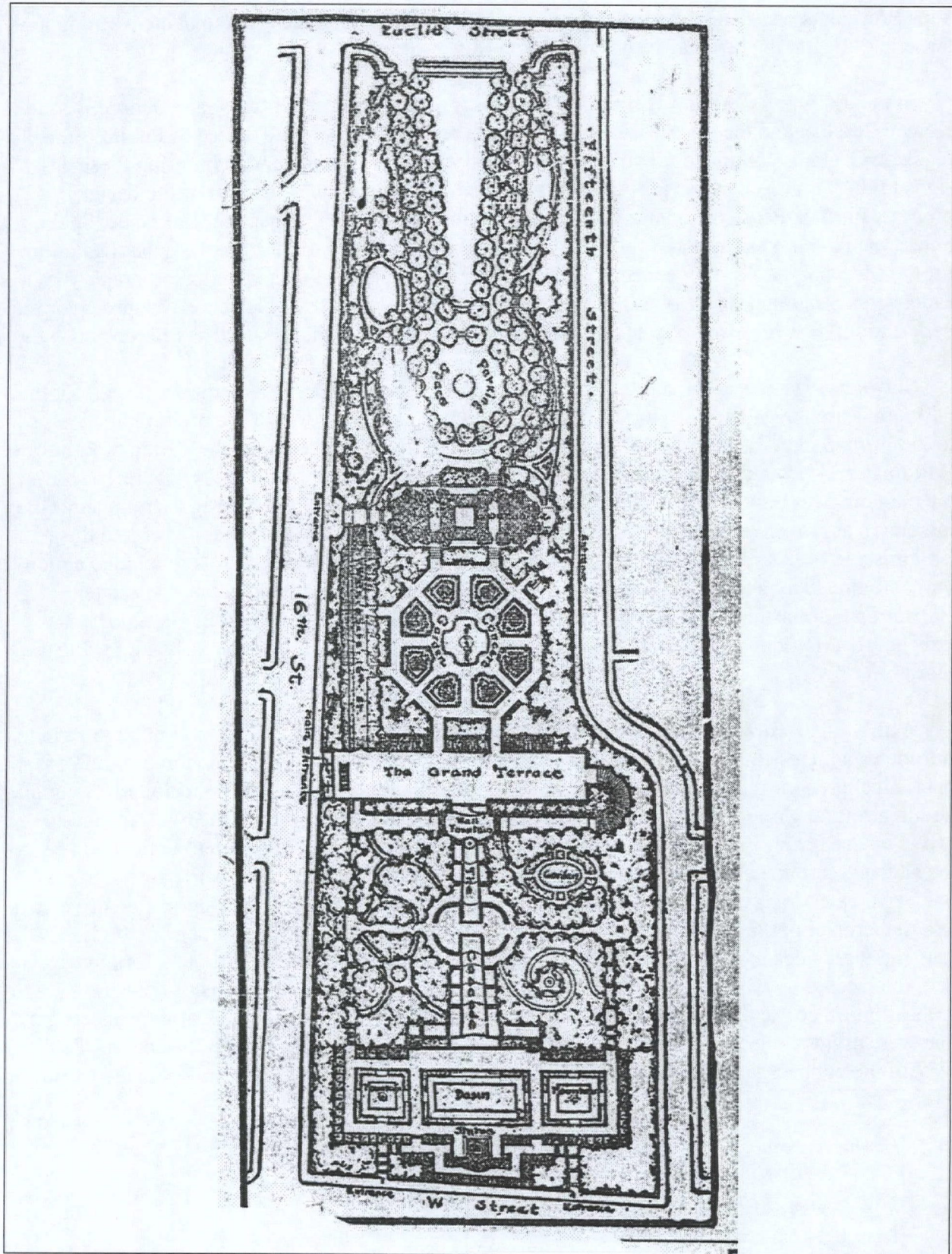


Figure 16: Photo of plan for Meridian Hill Park, circa 1914, in a newspaper article.5-16. North is to the top of the plan (Washington Star, Nov. 7, 191?, RCP-CRF). Note: What is identified in this plan as the "Grand Terrace" is later called the "Great Terrace." Note also the subtle shift in the main north/south axis to respond to the irregular shape of the site.

with the great terrace (or grand terrace as indicated on the plan) and what was then proposed as the main entrance of the park. The great terrace, which separated the upper and lower halves of the park, provided expansive views of the lower park and downtown Washington. The great terrace was also the location of the main entrance to the park, which led up a flight of stairs from 16th Street.

Below the great terrace, the 1914 plan featured sloping, Italianesque hillside gardens that incorporated both plantings and water features. Central to these lower gardens were a series of eight descending basins of water that formed a cascade. The cascade followed the main axis of the park, and was traversed midway by a foot bridge that connected the two halves of the lower gardens. The two halves of the lower gardens, east and west, were further subdivided by paths to create four distinct areas planted with groves of trees or boscos. Each of the four groves was traversed by a series of meandering paths, which contrasted with the straight, direct paths framing the hillside area. South of the hillside gardens on the 1914 plan was a level plaza that anchored the lower park. At the center of the lower plaza was a rectangular reflecting pool that was flanked on the east and west by square fountains. On the south side of the reflecting pool, on axis with the cascade, an area was set aside for a memorial to President James Buchanan. On both the east and west sides of this statue niche, stairs connected the lower park directly to W Street.

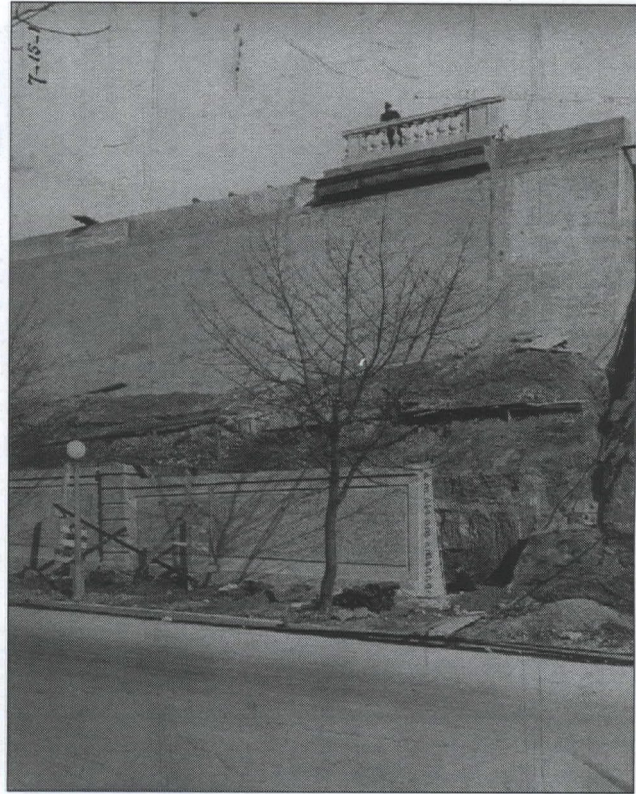


Figure 17: Upper wall along 16th Street during construction. Note balustrade mock-up at top of wall. Also note how the extreme change in topography along 16th Street was dealt with by constructing two smaller retaining walls. The area between the two walls was heavily planted to reduce their visual impact. (RCP-CRF, c. 1915-1916).

A September 1914 letter from Colonel William Harts, the Officer-in-Charge of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, to the U.S. Army Chief of Engineers, estimated the total cost of construction and planting at Meridian Hill Park to be \$310,000, with work expected to take twelve years to complete.³²

The year 1915 marked the beginning of park construction (see plan sheet 3). In 1915, \$25,000 was appropriated for the construction of the lower retaining wall on the 16th Street side of the park. John Earley was hired to help develop the exposed aggregate concrete finishes, and to supervise the construction of the retaining walls in the park (for a more extensive biography of John Earley, see Appendix 2). Plans and a mock-up section of the proposed wall (see figures 17

³² Colonel William W. Harts, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, to the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 14 September 1914.

and 18) received extensive review by the Commission of Fine Arts, specifically by a committee made up of prominent Philadelphia architect Cass Gilbert, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., and Charles Moore, Chairman of the Commission.³³ This committee made several minor changes after viewing the mock-up, such as widening the base of the wall by one-half inch and combining several of the wall panels into one.

In January 1915, the excavation work for the retaining wall began. The excavated material was used to fill low areas in the upper part of the park. Actual construction of the wall began in April, but was not completed until May, 1916, due to several work interruptions to re-design architectural details of the wall.³⁴ In September 1915, construction also began on the upper wall fronting the highest part of the ground on 16th Street, with another \$25,000 appropriated for the job.³⁵ The wall, opposite Crescent Place, took eight months to complete; it was finished in April, 1916.³⁶

It was also in 1915 that the Commission of Fine Arts recommended locating the Buchanan Memorial to the eastern side of the lower terrace, rather than on axis with the cascades.³⁷ This recommendation marked the beginning of a new phase in the park design, one that moved away from the complex axial plan and into what the Commission referred to as design simplification and restraint in ornamentation.³⁸ This new attitude was due to the influence of Charles Moore, previously secretary of the McMillan Commission, who stated this idea of simplification as early as 1901; he became the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts in 1915.³⁹

The Commission of Fine Arts set the tone for the development of the park in their report of June 30, 1916: "The plans for the interior of the park have been restudied many times, always with a view to simplicity of design and the largest possible usefulness to the public. This small park overlooking the city offers opportunities of enjoyment comparable to those furnished by the famous Roman gardens."⁴⁰

33 CFA Minutes, 20 May 1915.

34 *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1915.*

35 *Ibid.*

36 *Ibid.*

37 Dolan, p. 27.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

39 *Ibid.*

40 CFA Report, 30 June 1916.



Figure 18: Mock-up of balustrade at 16th Street, (RCP-CRF, c. 1915-1916).

Removal of existing houses and other debris was authorized by the Chief of Engineers on November 13, 1912 and was completed by January, 1913.

CHAPIN STREET

BELMONT ST

FIFTEENTH STREET

EUCLID STREET

W STREET

Contract for the upper 16th Street retaining wall was entered into on September 25, 1915. The wall was completed in April, 1916

SIXTEENTH STREET

CRESCENT PLACE

BELMONT ST

All but 160 feet of the Sixteenth Street wall was completed in 1916.

Excavation for the lower 16th Street retaining wall began in January, 1915. Contract for building the lower retaining wall entered into on March 20, 1915. Work began in April, was stopped on May 10 for revision, and resumed in August.

50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

DATE:
7-1-99

**LEVEL OF
COMPLETION
1916**
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 3

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DRAWN BY:
MACS

2.3 1917 - 1923

The years 1917 to 1923 were significant years for the design and construction of Meridian Hill Park. During this period the design of the park was finalized and construction continued on both the structures (built elements) (see plan sheet 4) and the plantings (see plan sheet 5). The mall was largely completed and opened to the public during this period, along with the placement of several important statues and memorials.

In 1917, at about the same time the United States was entering World War I, George Burnap resigned as the head of the Meridian Hill project and returned to private practice.¹ Horace Peaslee was named as his replacement in the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, and remained the architect in charge of design for the next 18 years.²

The change in leadership brought changes in design that would lead towards the park's ultimate form. On March 8, 1917, the Commission again reviewed Burnap's 1914 Plan. They advised "elimination of roadways and restudy of upper level with concert feature at back of great terrace and central treatment flanked with informal development."³ This resulted in a redesign of the park by Horace Peaslee, submitted to the Commission on April 20 and then revised and re-submitted July 13. The revised plan (see figure 19), illustrates the trend of the Commission towards simplification of the design.

While the 1917 Peaslee plan for the upper park was much simpler in design than the 1914 Burnap plan, most of the rest of the park remained the same. The site was still divided into four main sections: upper park, great terrace, hillside gardens/cascades, and lower plaza. All of the main features of the park continued to be oriented along the main longitudinal axis of the site, and the general circulation pattern that drew visitors onto the great terrace and into the center of the park was retained. This included the two major entrances off 16th Street, one leading directly to the great terrace (never built) and the main 16th Street entrance just to the north.

The mall was vastly simplified in the 1917 plan, by replacing the twin carriage drives and circular parking area in the 1914 plan with a grassed mall and two formal promenade walks that converged as they approached the great terrace.⁴ These formal promenades were flanked on their outer edges by formal, clipped hedges punctuated with alcoves for statuary. Each alcove was shown accented by four trees (see figures 19 and 20).

1 Dolan, *Meridian Hill Park*, p. 28.

2 *Ibid.* p. 28.

3 CFA Minutes, 8 March 1917.

4 HABS, p. 19.

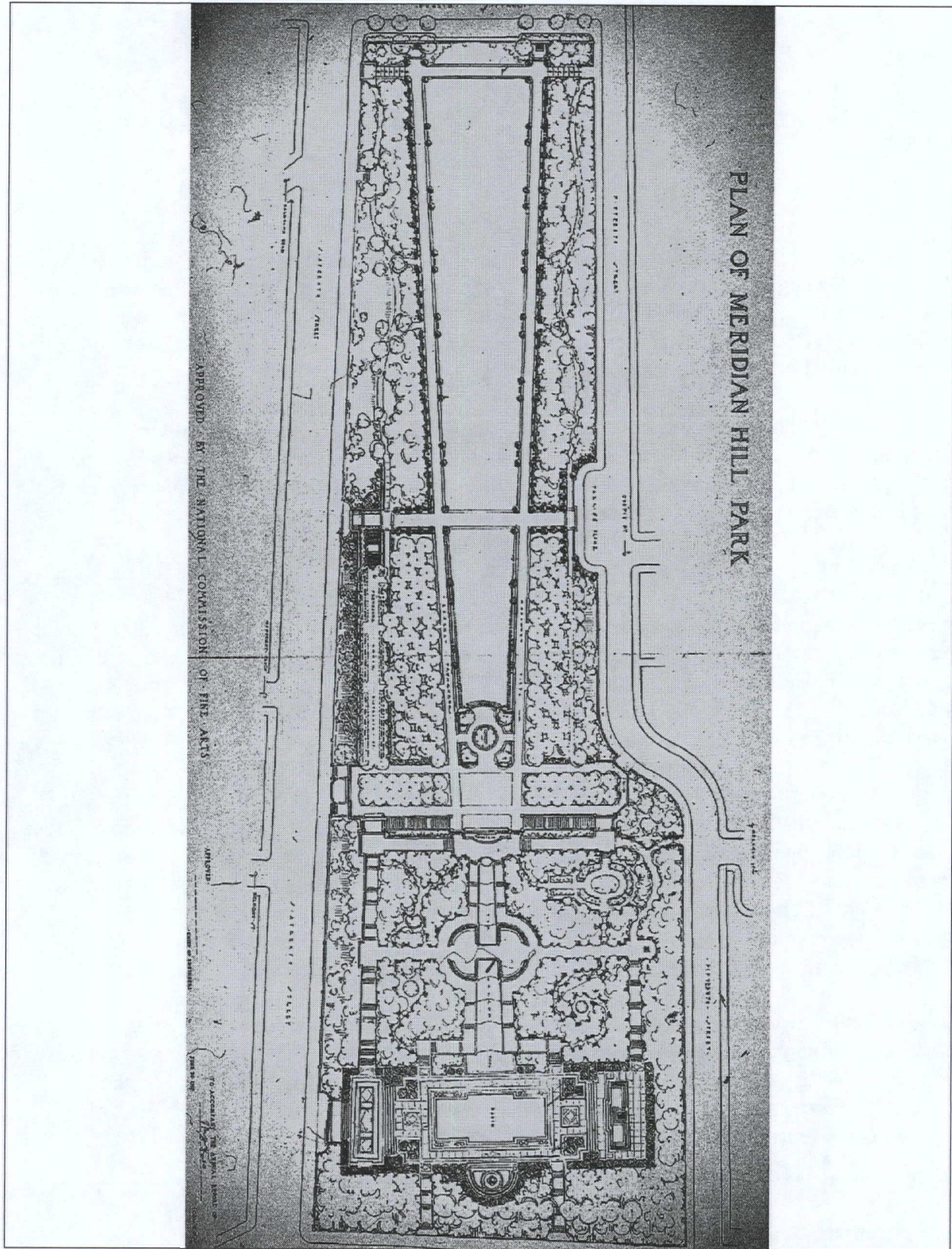
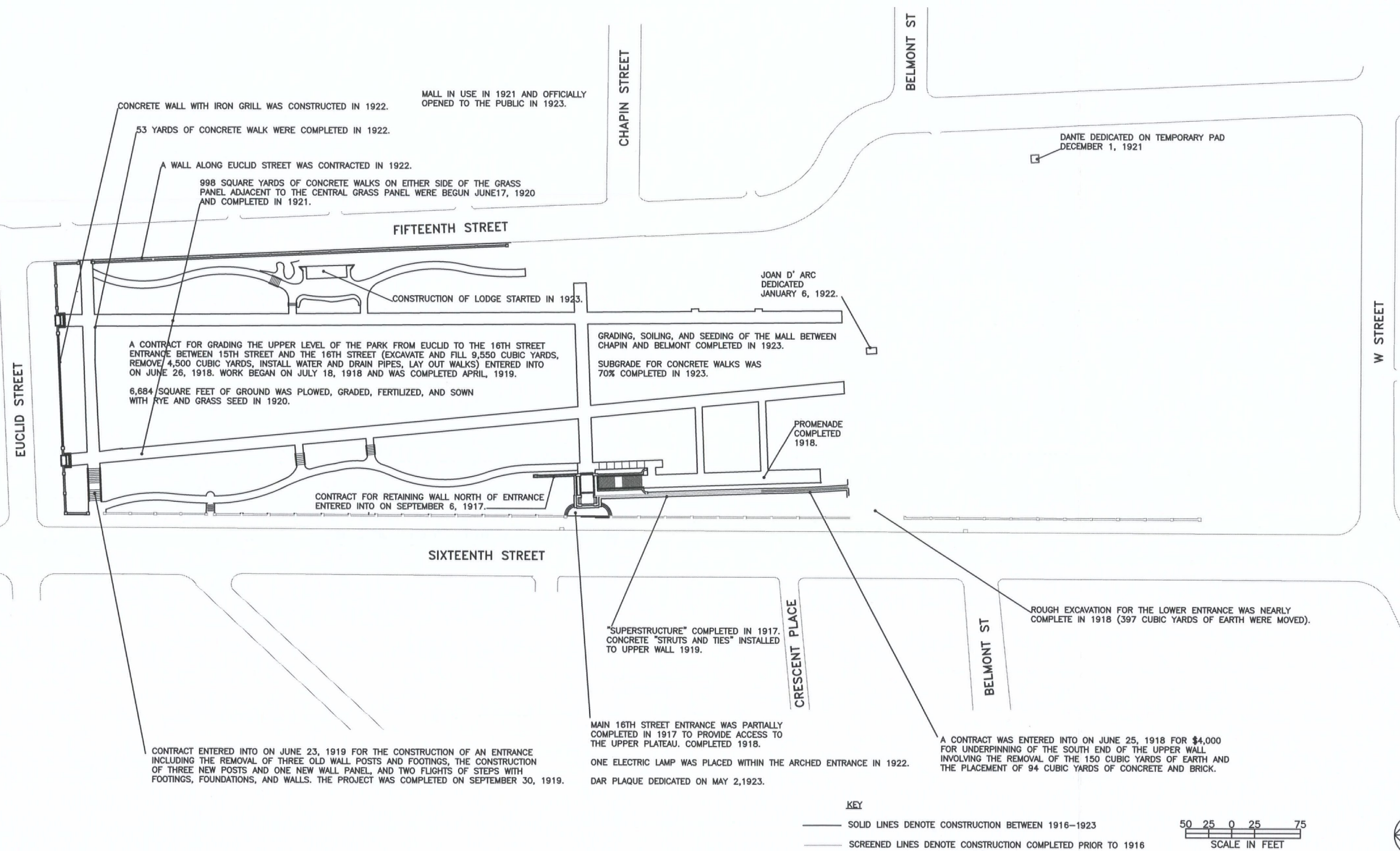


Figure 19: Plan for Meridian Hill Park, drawn by Horace Peaslee, dated June 30, 1917. North is to the top of the plan, 16th Street to the left. Note often discussed and modified, but ultimately never-executed tempietto, on main upper mall axis. Also note that the park as completed in 1936 deviates in a number of other ways from this drawing (National Archives RG 79, 41-57).



CONCRETE WALL WITH IRON GRILL WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1922.

53 YARDS OF CONCRETE WALK WERE COMPLETED IN 1922.

A WALL ALONG EUCLID STREET WAS CONTRACTED IN 1922.

998 SQUARE YARDS OF CONCRETE WALKS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE GRASS PANEL ADJACENT TO THE CENTRAL GRASS PANEL WERE BEGUN JUNE 17, 1920 AND COMPLETED IN 1921.

MALL IN USE IN 1921 AND OFFICIALLY OPENED TO THE PUBLIC IN 1923.

FIFTEENTH STREET

CONSTRUCTION OF LODGE STARTED IN 1923.

A CONTRACT FOR GRADING THE UPPER LEVEL OF THE PARK FROM EUCLID TO THE 16TH STREET ENTRANCE BETWEEN 15TH STREET AND THE 16TH STREET (EXCAVATE AND FILL 9,550 CUBIC YARDS, REMOVE 4,500 CUBIC YARDS, INSTALL WATER AND DRAIN PIPES, LAY OUT WALKS) ENTERED INTO ON JUNE 26, 1918. WORK BEGAN ON JULY 18, 1918 AND WAS COMPLETED APRIL, 1919.

6,684 SQUARE FEET OF GROUND WAS PLOWED, GRADED, FERTILIZED, AND SOWN WITH RYE AND GRASS SEED IN 1920.

GRADING, SOILING, AND SEEDING OF THE MALL BETWEEN CHAPIN AND BELMONT COMPLETED IN 1923.

SUBGRADE FOR CONCRETE WALKS WAS 70% COMPLETED IN 1923.

JOAN D' ARC DEDICATED JANUARY 6, 1922.

PROMENADE COMPLETED 1918.

CONTRACT FOR RETAINING WALL NORTH OF ENTRANCE ENTERED INTO ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1917.

SIXTEENTH STREET

"SUPERSTRUCTURE" COMPLETED IN 1917. CONCRETE "STRUTS AND TIES" INSTALLED TO UPPER WALL 1919.

MAIN 16TH STREET ENTRANCE WAS PARTIALLY COMPLETED IN 1917 TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE UPPER PLATEAU. COMPLETED 1918.

ONE ELECTRIC LAMP WAS PLACED WITHIN THE ARCHED ENTRANCE IN 1922.

DAR PLAQUE DEDICATED ON MAY 2, 1923.

DANTE DEDICATED ON TEMPORARY PAD DECEMBER 1, 1921

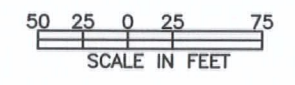
ROUGH EXCAVATION FOR THE LOWER ENTRANCE WAS NEARLY COMPLETE IN 1918 (397 CUBIC YARDS OF EARTH WERE MOVED).

A CONTRACT WAS ENTERED INTO ON JUNE 25, 1918 FOR \$4,000 FOR UNDERPINNING OF THE SOUTH END OF THE UPPER WALL INVOLVING THE REMOVAL OF THE 150 CUBIC YARDS OF EARTH AND THE PLACEMENT OF 94 CUBIC YARDS OF CONCRETE AND BRICK.

CONTRACT ENTERED INTO ON JUNE 23, 1919 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ENTRANCE INCLUDING THE REMOVAL OF THREE OLD WALL POSTS AND FOOTINGS, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THREE NEW POSTS AND ONE NEW WALL PANEL, AND TWO FLIGHTS OF STEPS WITH FOOTINGS, FOUNDATIONS, AND WALLS. THE PROJECT WAS COMPLETED ON SEPTEMBER 30, 1919.

KEY

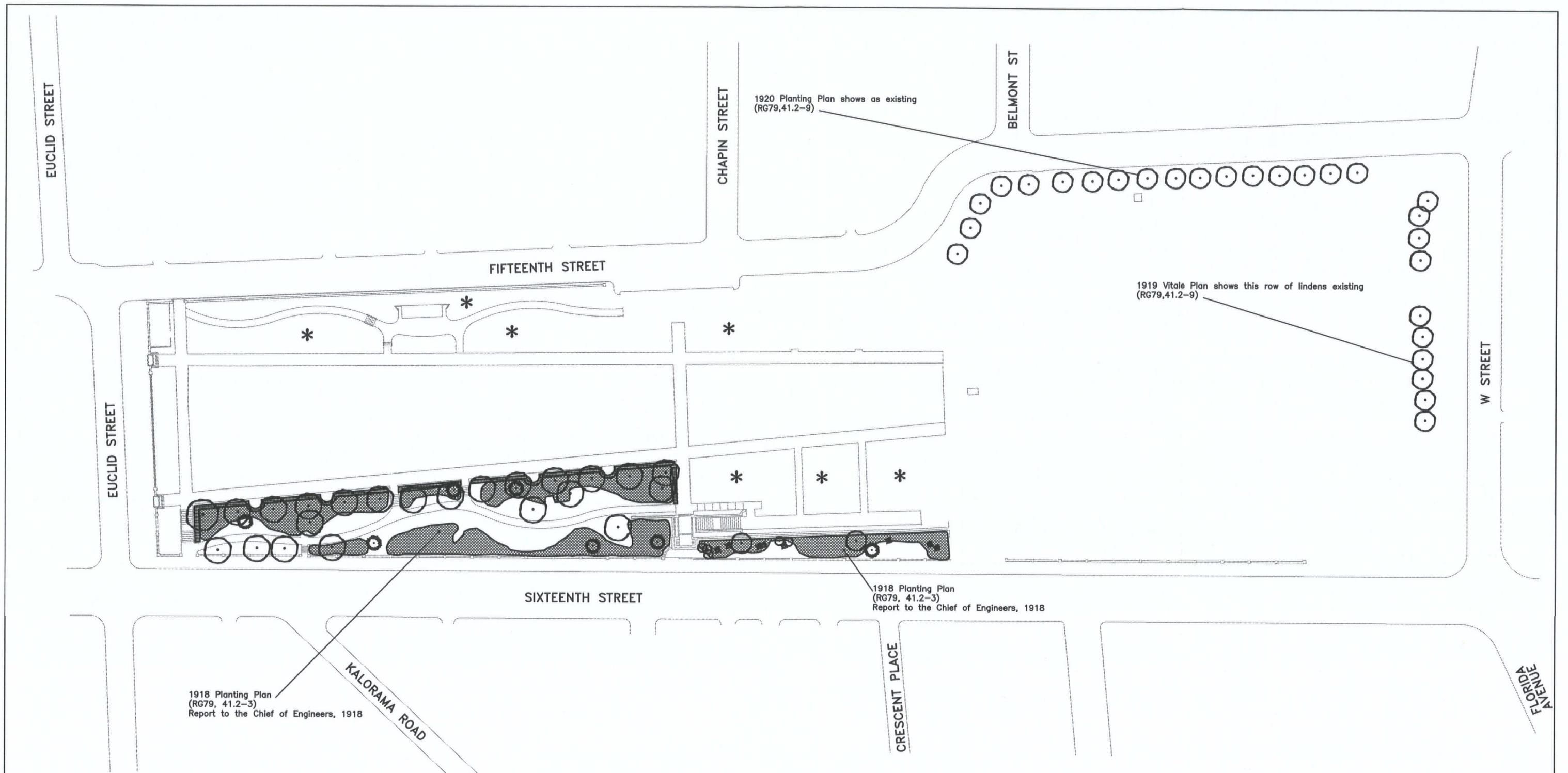
- SOLID LINES DENOTE CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN 1916-1923
- SCREENED LINES DENOTE CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED PRIOR TO 1916



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region 15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW. Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.	DATE: 7-1-99	CONSTRUCTION 1916-1923 MERIDIAN HILL PARK	DRAWING NO. 872 87141
	DRAWN BY: MACS		SHEET 4



KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- EVERGREEN TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- DECIDUOUS TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD
- EVERGREEN TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD

- GRASS
- GROUND COVER
- SHRUB MASS
- HEDGE

- BLACK FOR NEW GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- SCREENED SYMBOL FOR GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES PREDATING THE TIME PERIOD

* BECAUSE THE UPPER PARK WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED IN 1923, IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT THESE AREAS WERE AT LEAST GRASSED (ALSO AS A PART OF ROUTINE CONTRACT CLOSE-OUT). BUT THERE IS NO DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF WHAT WAS ACTUALLY IN THESE LOCATIONS.

NOTE: SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.

50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by: Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

PLANTING 1916-1923

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 5

Thus, cars and carriages had been removed from the mall, except for a small parking area along 15th Street, opposite Chapin Street. The complex plantings north of the concert garden were eliminated and it was reduced in size around a circular bandstand, or “tempietto.” The meandering paths that appeared on both the east and west sides of the carriage drives on the 1914 plan were retained on the 1917 plan, as was the allee connecting the west path with the great terrace. The great terrace was further detailed in the 1917 plan to include two parallel rows of trees along its east-west axis and two stairs descending east and west from the terrace into the lower gardens.

Below the great terrace, the lower gardens of the park were altered only slightly from the 1914 plan. The paths through the four “wilderness groves” or boscos were simplified, however the design of the cascades and the bridge that crossed them remained the same. According to Peaslee, the treatment of the whole hillside south of the great terrace was to be based in a general way on the Colonna Gardens in Rome.⁵ The revised plans for the lower plaza included the Buchanan Memorial on the east side of the reflecting pool and an entrance from 16th Street on the west side of the reflecting pool. An exedra appears in the 1917 plan as the terminal point of the park’s longitudinal axis with the suggestion of a focal point that later became the Armillary Sphere.

Revisions to the plan were again submitted to the Commission on January 18, 1918. A water basin to the north of the bandstand was suggested for the Mall but was turned down by the Commission. By March 1, 1918, Peaslee’s plan for the park, redrawn to meet the advice and criticism of the Commission, again received approval (see figure 20).⁶ The 15th Street Lodge appears for the first time on this plan and the design of the great terrace is modified to include a fountain at both the 15th and 16th Street ends. The design of the hillside gardens has also been modified with curving pathways throughout and a garden theater in the northeast quadrant. The first specimen trees in the lower plaza are shown in planting panels at the four corners of the reflecting pool. The letter that accompanied this plan submission described the concept for development of the park:

“The scheme for development of this park is based upon the idea of having in the Capitol [sic] of the United States one display garden which shall be comparable to the great public gardens of Rome, Paris and other national capitals—a landscape work which shall set a high standard in design and execution for other American cities. On account of the importance and topography of the site, the design has been modeled on the great Italian gardens featuring the retention of the upper levels for promenade and view and taking advantage of the slopes for the repeated use of water in fountain, cascade and pool. The plan is based upon the original design by George Burnap with a simplification of the upper level and the revised detail of the lower garden prepared in connection with the proposed Buchanan Memorial—all in accordance with the suggestions of the Commission of Fine Arts.”⁷

5 Horace W. Peaslee, to Colonel C.S. Ridley, Officer-in-Charge, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds (memo), 20 February 1918.

6 Minutes of the Commission of Fine Arts, 1 March 1918.

7 Horace W. Peaslee to Colonel C. S. Ridley, 20 February 1918.

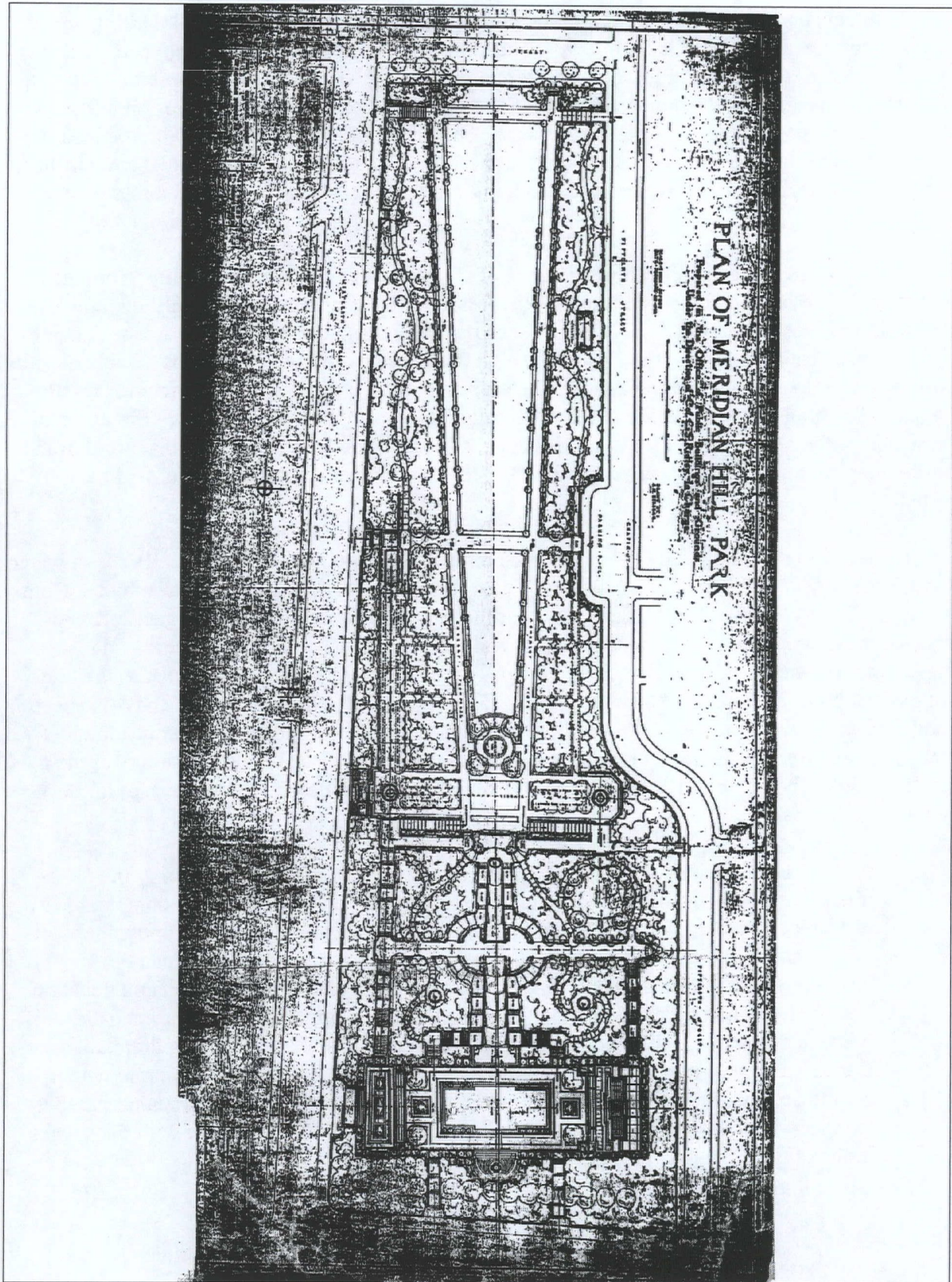


Figure 20: 1918 Plan of the Park, approved by the Commission of Fine Arts, March 1. North is to the top of the plan with 16th Street to the left (National Archives, RG 79, 41-65).



Figure 21: 16th Street entrance during construction, (RCP-CRF, c. 1918).

While the design of the park was evolving, construction continued on the 16th Street retaining walls. John Earley had begun the walls in 1915, and completed the lower retaining wall in 1916, and the upper one in 1917. At their September meeting, the Commission of Fine Arts reviewed plans for the main 16th Street entrance and in January, through their designated agent, Commission of Fine Arts member Charles Platt, reviewed and modified models of various aspects of the entrance including rustication.⁸ Much of the construction work in 1917 focused on the main 16th Street entrance to the park, and although \$25,000 had been appropriated for all work that year, lack of funding kept the entrance from being completed until 1918 (see figure 21).⁹ Fifty thousand dollars was appropriated in 1918, allowing the north entrance on 16th Street to be completed and the area between the two retaining walls on 16th Street to be planted with deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs.¹⁰

A planting plan (see figure 22) for the area between the two retaining walls, was

completed by John H. Small, Jr., Landscape Designer for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in February, 1918, and approved by the Commission on March 1st of that year. In its overall form it followed Peaslee's approved concept design for that area of the park, detailing specific plants for each of Peaslee's plant masses. According to the comments of the Commission, the plantings were designed for "immediate effect" with evergreen material predominating.¹¹ The Commission also indicated that vines should be used more freely on the lower walls than the upper, and the "cedars purchased from well-pruned nursery stock to avoid replacement."¹² As indicated on the plan, the area was designed with a mix of evergreen and deciduous plant materials, in varying heights from trees and shrubs, to groundcovers. The plantings between the 16th Street retaining walls were laid out in naturalistic forms, with groups of flowering trees such as Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) and Shadblow Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*) set in beds of shrubs including Japanese Witch hazel (*Hamamelis japonica*), Japanese Mahonia (*Mahonia japonica*), Abelia (*Abelia rupestris*), Common Snowberry

8 CFA Minutes, 5 September 1916 and 12 January 1917.

9 *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1918*.

10 *Ibid.*

11 CFA Minutes, 21 December 1917.

12 *Ibid.*

(*Symphoricarpos* sp.), Quince (*Cydonia japonica*) and shrub roses (*Rosa wichuriana*), with groundcovers of St. John's Wort (*Hypericum x moserianum*), Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*) and English Ivy (*Hedera helix*). The plan also shows the Linden Allee above the upper retaining wall: two rows of European Linden (*Tilia europaea*) flanked by a formal, rectangular clipped hedge to the east.¹³

In October 1918 a concept plan of the lower plaza and hillside gardens prepared by Irving Payne, Landscape Architect, of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, provided a preliminary view of the planting concept for this area. The plan reproduces Peaslee's March 1918 approved design and adds a perspective view across the lower plaza (see figure 23). The plan shows heavily wooded areas composing the Hillside Gardens, outlined with formal, rectilinear clipped hedges in both the plan and an attached perspective. This early concept for the plantings survives remarkably intact throughout the development of the planting plans for the next 16 years. This same planting concept of formal clipped hedges juxtaposed against a naturalistic woodland planting is also evident in the sketches of the cascades executed September 11, 1918 by Joseph M. Kellogg (see figure 24) and inspected by the Commission of Fine Arts on January 8, 1919. The sketches reveal clipped hedges slightly taller than the human figure included in the section (six to seven feet in height) following the length of the cascades. The clipped hedges are punctuated by columnar trees at the bridge at the mid point of the cascades, and framed by naturalistic plantings in the garden areas. This design concept was maintained through subsequent design revisions and was ultimately executed during the 1930's.

At this time, areas of the park were being constructed as they were designed without an overall approved plan for the site—a piecemeal approach that threatened to weaken the original design concept. For this reason, two efforts went forward: Peaslee worked to revise and finalize the general plan for the park and, at the request of Colonel Ridley, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, the Commission approved the hiring of a landscape architect, Ferruccio Vitale, of Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert, New York City, to develop a planting plan for the entire park.

Figure 22: (following page) 1918 planting plan for the area between the 16th Street retaining walls prepared by John Small, Land Designer of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and approved by Horace Peaslee, all before Ferruccio Vitale was hired as the landscape architect for the park in 1919. It does not appear that Small had any further involvement with the park. Note that this planting plan contains thirty-eight different kinds of plant materials and that various quantities of several different types of plant material--i.e. flowering trees, shrubs, and vines-- were designated to be planted in large bed areas, but the locations of individual plants were not shown. Thus, it is unclear how the plants would have been massed in relation to each other and it appears that quantities of plants were excessive for the allotted space although this may have been designed to achieve an immediate effect. Also, considering the kinds of plants selected, many would have soon grown into and over each other if actually planted. The Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1918 indicates that at least a portion of the plan was implemented, but several subsequent plans were done for this same area. North is to the left of the plan; the main 16th Street entrance is to the left and the Great Terrace is to the right of the drawing.

13 The hedge, while indicated in the plan, is not labeled as to plant species, and therefore only provides context in the plan. It was not intended to be planted at this time but merely reflects Peaslee's overall plan for the park.

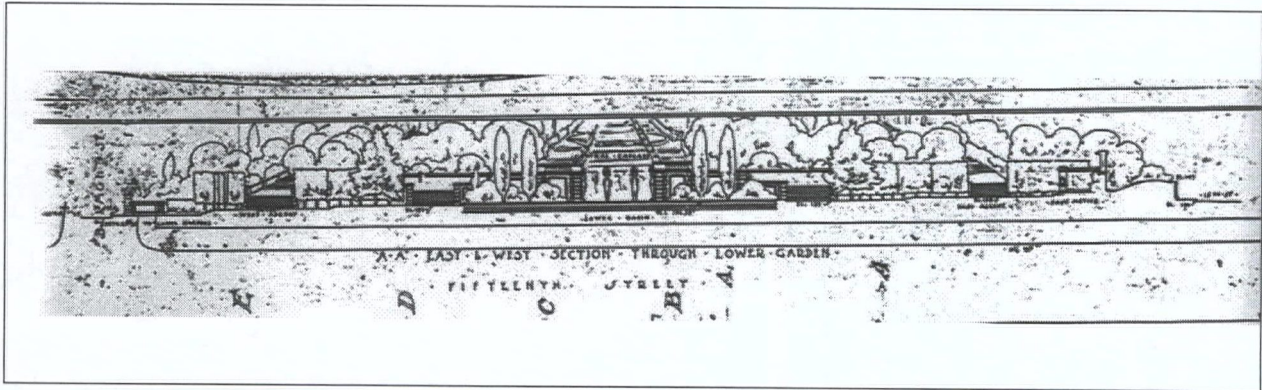


Figure 23: Cross-sectional sketch from 1918 plan of the Lower Gardens looking north from the lower plaza to illustrate the planting concept (National Archives RG 79, 41-3).

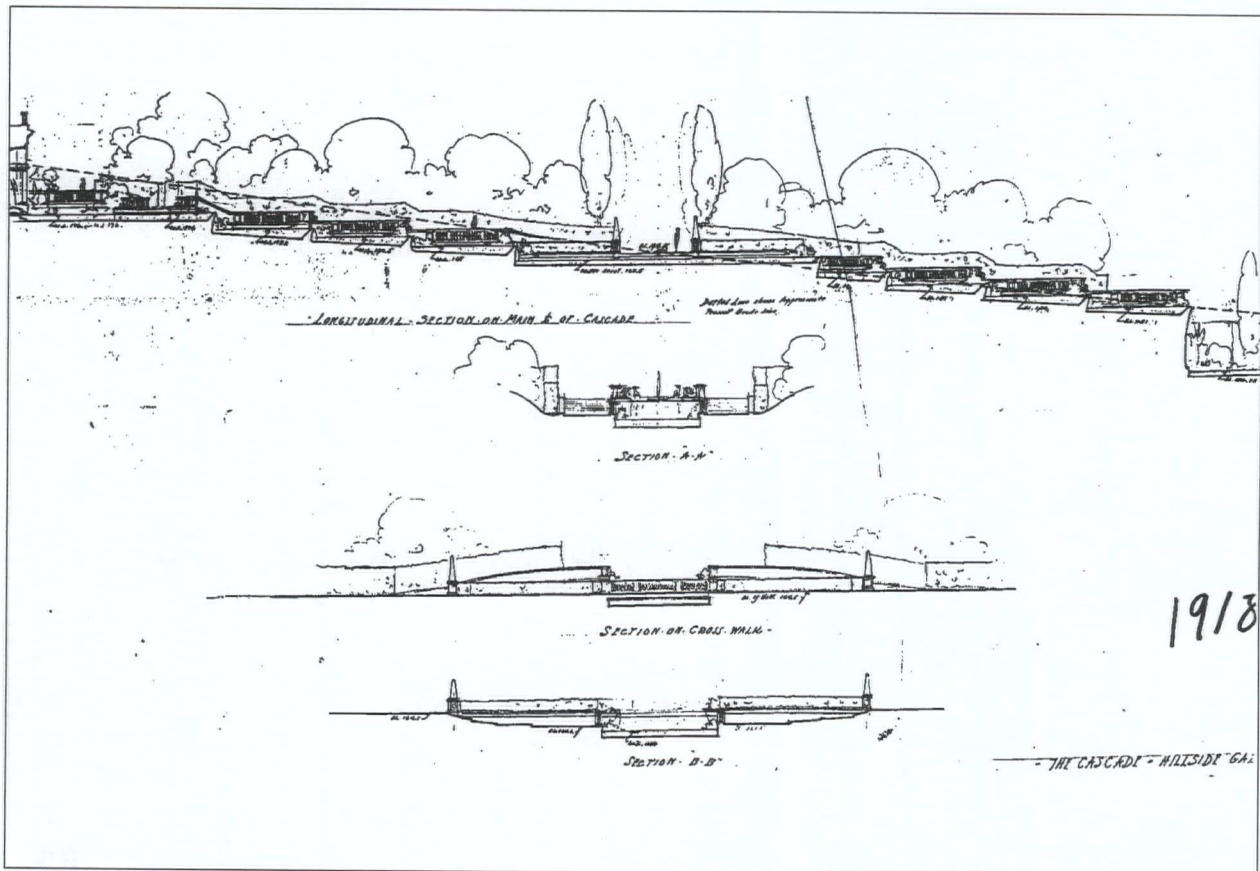


Figure 24: Sections through the cascades showing planting concept bordering the cascade walks, drawn by Joseph M. Kellogg, September 10, 1918 (National Archives, RG 79, 41-68).

Throughout 1919, preparation of a final, simplified overall plan for the park was developed. In January of 1919, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds submitted a series of 94 sketches and drawings, along with a scale model (see figure 25), to the Committee of Fine Arts for approval. The sketches included the cascades, the hillside gardens, the great terrace, the great wall with its service spaces and toilet rooms, and a music pavilion.¹⁴ The Commission carefully reviewed and annotated the sketches, with recommendations for the final plan.



Figure 25: Clay model of Meridian Hill Park. Many models were produced during the years of design revisions, however only a few photographs of them remain today. This is an example of one of the clay models; the photograph is undated. The model is of the great terrace as seen from the 16th Street entrance entrance that was never executed (RCP-CRF c. 1919-1921).

The final simplified plan, dated July 30, 1920 (see figure 26), approved by the Commission was not substantially different from the 1917 Peaslee plan. The bridge crossing over the cascades was eliminated, along with an oval amphitheater on the east ascent of the lower gardens and the meandering paths in the hillside gardens. The lower park was also simplified, and the entrance from 16th Street to the great terrace was deleted. The mall was simplified by removing the trees along the inside of the promenade walkways leading up to the concert pavilion.

Development of Vitale Planting Plan

After the Commission's first review of Vitale's preliminary planting plans in January of 1919, they expressed the following design intent for the plantings:

"...There seems to be [a] unanimous opinion that the areas... on the hill slope should be treated as a whole with two cross axes; that each of the four is too small for separate treatment with distinct little designs; that if so treated the effect will be fussy and the slope look restless, 'busy' as one expressed it to me. Having breadth and simplicity in view, the Commission concur[s] with Mr. Vitale's proposal of broad simple planting in distinction from restless designs and massing of varied grouping of evergreen bushes and trees. The latter idea reaches its extreme in bedding of fancy evergreens. I can see that this type of planting but, I hasten to add, greatly modified and toned down, is in Mr. Payne's mind and influence [sic] his recommendations of varieties...."¹⁵

"...Mr. Vitale is thinking of the days to come when the Park shall have become mellowed by the years and the hill slope shall have clusters of trees of fine sky line with picturesque trunks and branches beneath which the people will walk down the hill side. The cascade and stairs on the axis, the cross path and the central oval, the wall and balustrade above, all will give the right balance of design; the flickering shadow of the trees will soften the formal lines and give contrast to the open areas of sunlight; ... The inspiration is from the old hillside villa terraces of Italy where clusters of fine stone pine stand boldly against the sky and the distant scene is all the more effective because of their overhanging branches."¹⁶

14 HABS, p. 21.

15 James Greenleaf to Colonel C. S. Ridley, 17 February 1919.

16 *Ibid.*

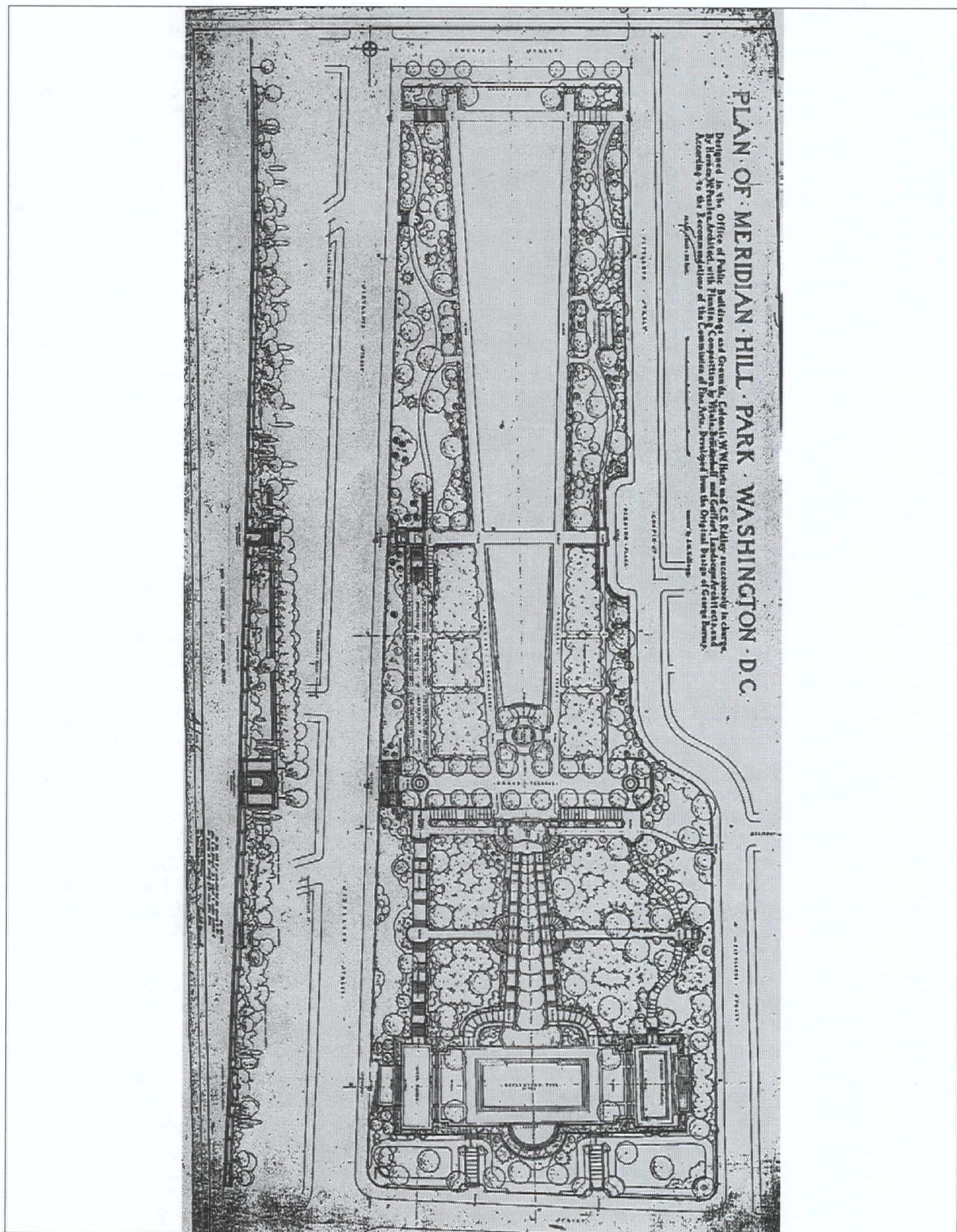


Figure 26: 1920 Plan of Meridian Hill Park, Horace Peaslee, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, approved as the plan to be followed, August 23, 1922. North is to the top of the plan, 16th Street to the left. Note that tall, regularly-spaced evergreens were to have lined each side of the mall and that one bridge across the cascades is now eliminated, as are the meandering paths in the hillside gardens (National Archives, RG 79, 41-6).

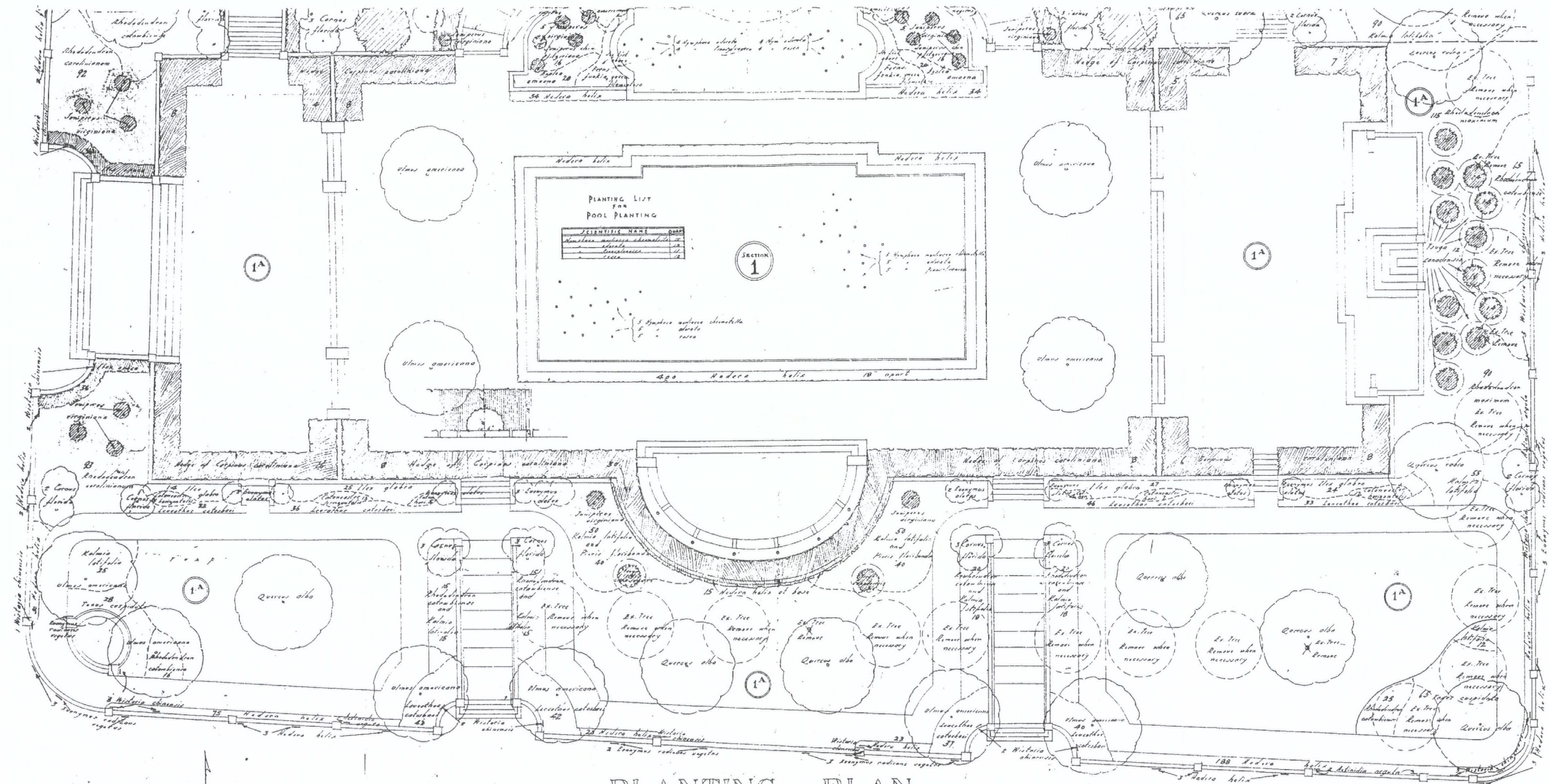
In July of 1919, Vitale obtained approval for the first detailed planting plan for the entire park.¹⁷ A version of the plan reproduced in figures 27, 28, 31, 32 and 33 provides a detailed representation of the initial plan, subsequently revised several times before implementation. Note the lower plaza and cascades plan (see figures 27 and 28) approved in 1920 with annotation from 1931; the great terrace and southern portion of the mall (see figure 33) approved in 1923. The lower plaza was finalized in the 1929 plan, the hillside gardens in the 1935 plan, the great terrace in the 1932 plan and the mall in a 1923 approved plan. Also, a general planting plan dated October 16, 1935 showed final additions and changes to the plantings throughout the park before its completion and official opening (figure 68)..

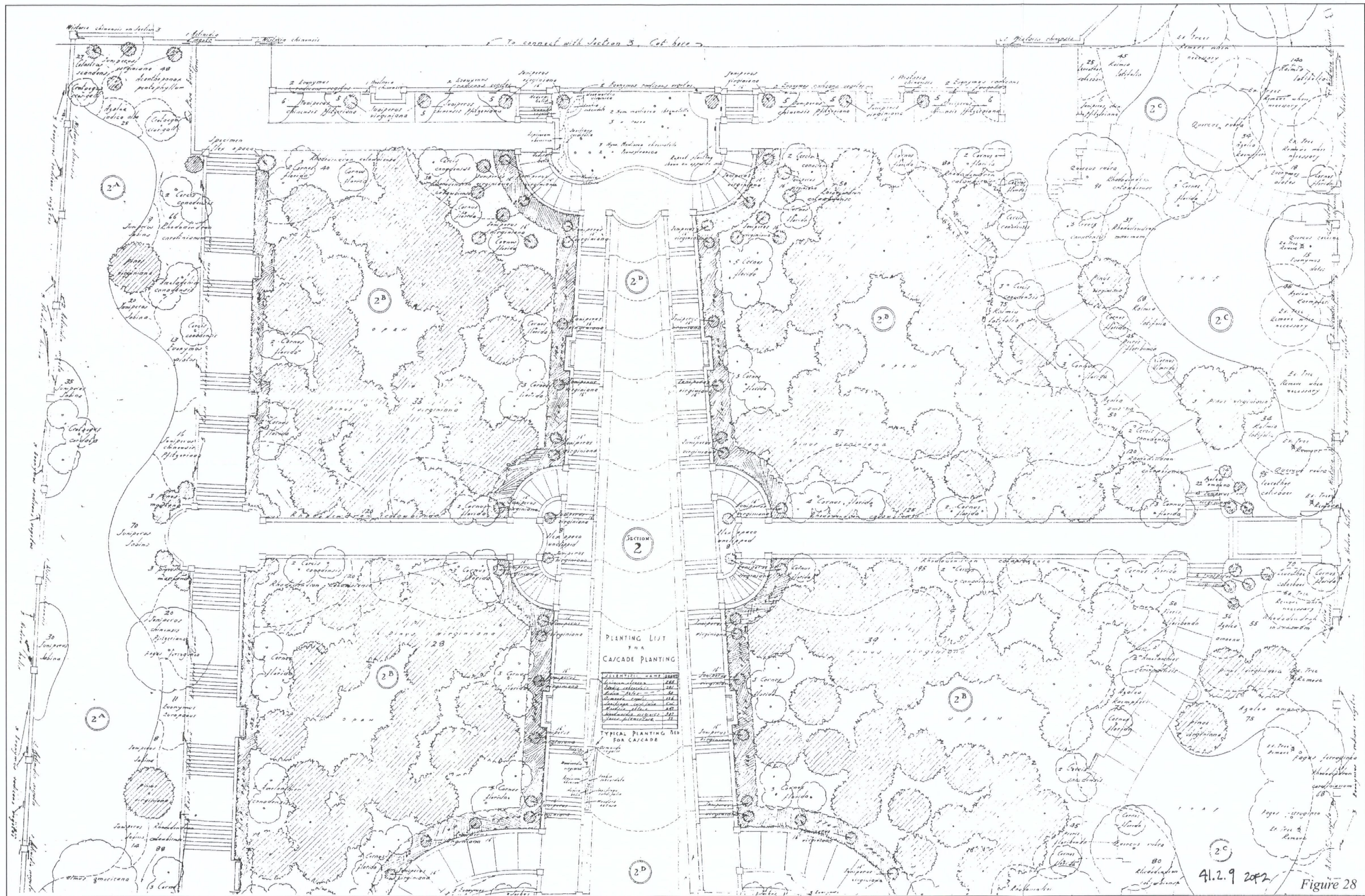
The October 4, 1920 version of the plan for the lower plaza and hillside gardens is reproduced in figures 27 and 28. Along the south end of the lower plaza, ten existing trees of unidentified species (identified on later plans as Lindens (*Tilia europea*), four of which still exist today), were indicated in a straight east to west line to the south of the exedra. Some were designated to be removed. American Elms (*Ulmus americana*) were designated to be planted flanking the southern entrances to the site off W Street, with the remaining area planted with White Oak (*Quercus alba*) and Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*). The lower plaza and the exedra were to be defined with hedges of American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) pruned to a height of 14 feet, 2 feet off the ground, and with 8 foot openings at the walkways (see figure 29). The pool in the plaza was intended to be planted with Water lilies (*Nymphaea* species: *matliacea chromatella*, *odorata*, *pennsylvanica* and *tovea*).

The area of the cascades continued the earlier planting concept, with woodland groves in the four quadrants, with formal, clipped hedges edging the cascades and the east side of the west ascent (see figure 28). In this plan, the groves were planted with Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*) with an edge of Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), and

Figure 27: (following) Lower plaza section of Vitale's 1920 planting plan. This plan shows an early version of the design for the lower plaza. Note the four elms planted at the corners of the reflecting pool, the lack of planting areas in the sub-plazas in front of the Buchanan Memorial and leading to 16th Street. Also note the changes in the border area between the plaza and W Street including the walks, later eliminated, from the plaza to W Street. Hedges are being used even in this early version to form walls around the plaza. Some of the row of trees noted "ex. tree: remove when necessary," (European lindens), are still present on the site. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-9)

Figure 28: (following) Hillside gardens portion of Vitale's 1920 planting plan begun in early 1919 as the final simplified plan for the park was being developed by Peaslee. These 1919-1920 versions of the overall plan and detailed planting plans show the simplification of the hillside garden quadrants with the elimination of paths and features. The dense planting of the hillsides with Virginia pine was intended to create a dark evergreen massing like those of the hold hillside villa terraces of Italy. The edges of all four quadrants were softened by clusters of understory flowering trees, such as flowering dogwood, red bud, and serviceberry. In key locations the flowering trees were under-planted with masses of flowering shrubs such as rhododendrons and azaleas to reinforce the constructed elements. For example, while the curvilinear east ascent is reflected by the informal massings of shrubs along it, the east edge of the straight west ascent is defined by a formal clipped hedge as are both edges of the cascades. The cascades hedges have accent red cedars planted within them. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-9).





Shadblow Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*) along their edges. Although the hedge around the lower plaza was composed of American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), forming a very formal room, the hedges at the hillside quadrants were composed of American Holly (*Ilex opaca*). The hedge on either side of the cascades was punctuated at regular intervals with 16 foot high Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), with clusters of these trees also placed in the ground cover on both sides of the top and bottom of the cascades.

Planting within the planting beds along the cascades was composed of a variety of groundcovers and small, herbaceous perennials. Included in the plant list for this area are Ebony Spleenwort (*Asplenium ebeneum*), Hosta (*Funkia subcordata*), English Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Rock Foil (*Saxifraga cordifolia*), Blunt Lobed Fern (*Woodsia obtusa*), Virginia Chain Fern (*Woodwardia virginica*), and Adam's-Needle Yucca (*Yucca filamentosa*).

The remainder of the planting design in this area used a similar palette of evergreen and deciduous material. Between the west ascent and 16th Street, the planting area contained Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*), American Beech (*Fagus ferruginea*), Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), Shadblow Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*), and Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.) under-planted with massings of Savin Juniper (*Juniperus sabina*), Catawba Rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*), Mugo Pine (*Pinus montana*), Pfitzer Juniper (*Juniperus chinensis pfitzeriana*) and European Euonymous (*Euonymus europaeus*) surrounding a large grass bed, later changed to ground cover. Between the east ascent and 15th Street, trees of Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), Virginia Pine (*Pinus virginiana*), American Beech (*Fagus ferruginea*), Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) and Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*) are under-planted with massings of Azaleas (*Azalea amoena*), Drooping Leucothoe (*Leucothoe catesbaei*), Rosebay Rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*), Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), Fetterbush or Mountain Pieris (*Pieris floribunda*), and Catawba Rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*). Eastern Red Cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) were planted as vertical elements on both sides of the walkway leading to the statue of Dante.

The plans for the great terrace and mall continue the planting scheme and plant palette. A 1924 revised version of the February 3, 1919 plan provides the basic concept for the northern portion of the mall (see figures 31 and 32). A 1923 revised version of the 1919 plan shows the great terrace and southern portion of the mall (see figure 33). Vitale's plan continues Peaslee's

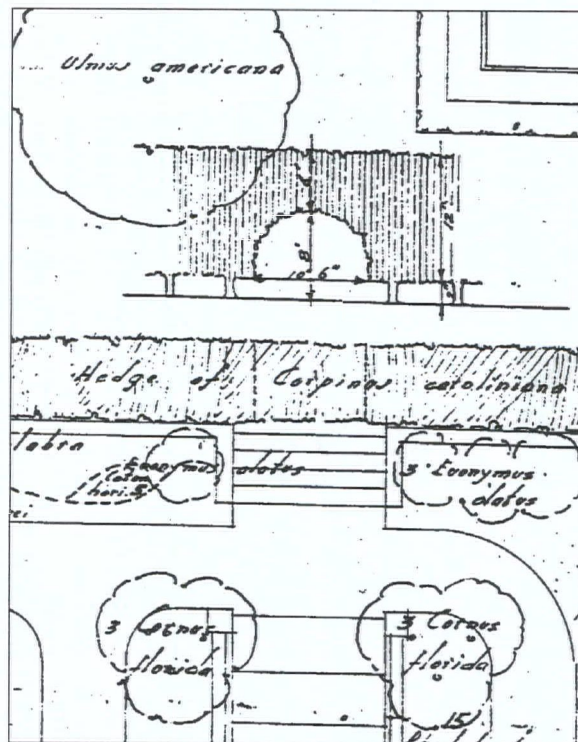


Figure 29: A portion of the October 4, 1920 plan by Vitale showing the American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) hedge surrounding the lower plaza. The hedge was to have been 14 feet tall with a eight foot archway at each walkway into the lower plaza from W Street. This figure illustrates graphically Peaslee and Vitale's use of vegetation in an architectonic way to create rooms and define spaces with hedges. These fourteen foot tall hedges surrounding the lower plaza were amended in 1929 to six feet tall and the arches eliminated. (National Archives, RG 79 41.2-9)

concept of a formal, open mall flanked in the north by informal plantings and in the south, adjacent to the concert pavilion, two concert groves of White Oak (*Quercus alba*). The original 1919 plan had two rows of American Elms (*Ulmus americana*) on the great terrace and four flanking the tempietto, however, a notation in 1923 indicates that these were to be changed to White Oak (*Quercus alba*). However, the oaks were changed back to elms on subsequent plans before planting actually took place on the terrace. Vitale's concept for the Elms was that "If trimmed high, these elms will not impede the view of the pavilion and the vistas over the Grand [sic] Terrace, and their arched appearance will make of the terrace a veritable arboreal colonnade."¹⁸

The plan also shows the linden allee in plan as well as a small section detailing the concept for pruning (see figure 33). Vitale made the following recommendations for pruning:

"The east and west sides of this double row of trees are to be clipped vertically to a uniform height of 23 feet, also the tops are to be clipped to a flat, level surface 23 feet above the ground. Further, each tree shall be clipped to a uniform level of 5 feet 6 inches in height above the ground. Immediately above the center of the existing walk, and between the two rows of trees, a circular arch shall be clipped 13 feet high and 13 feet wide."¹⁹

The design of the mall evolved from the earliest 1913 schemes with the tree-lined drives flanking the mall to schemes where the mall was flanked by walks with hedges and loosely massed trees on their outer sides. Peaslee and Vitale in their 1919 plan modified previous plans to show a row of regularly spaced White Oaks (*Quercus alba*) along the outside of the walks. The tall, clipped hedge, specified to "be kept at 8' height by trimming,"²⁰ is retained, and specified as Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*). Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) were shown on both sides of the hedge niches between the hedge and the walk.

The plant vocabulary being developed for the park is very clear in the following figures. White oaks and other large shade trees provide a high canopy while evergreen hedges were used to form walls along the mall and main entrance paths to the mall. Columnar evergreens were vertical punctuation along the hedge walls. The 1923-4 revisions to the following drawings added hatching to indicate implemented planting, deleted some plants, and show substitutes for others.

Figure 30: (following) Vitale's 1919 planting plan for the northern end of the mall, revised May 12, 1924. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-8).

Figure 31: (following) The center portion of Vitale's February 1919 planting plan for the mall, superceded May 12, 1924. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-8).

Figure 32: (following) Vitale's February 1919 plan for the great terrace and southern portion of the mall, revised February 8, 1923. Note the recessing of the southern grass panel of the mall with steps and the circular feature. Other elements ultimately not built shown on this drawing are the termini at the two minor cross axes through the oak groves. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-5).

18 Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert, '93Planting Design\94 Meridian Hill Park: Washington, D.C., 29 October, 1920.

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

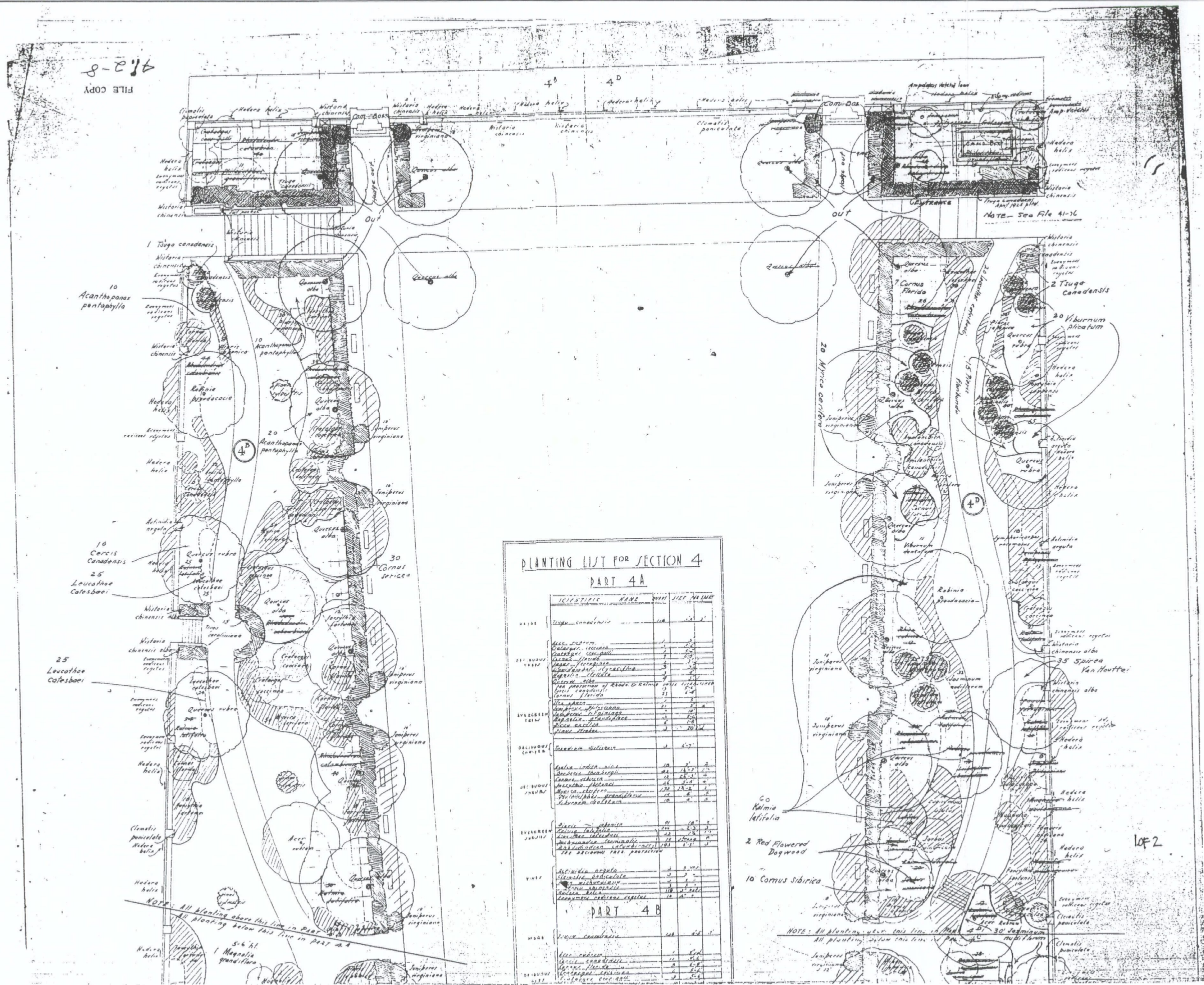


Figure 30

2.5 1928 - 1936

With the upper portion of the park complete and open to the public, work concentrated on the lower park during the period from 1928 through 1936, including the completion of all structural work, the building of the cascades, and the planning and planting of the lower park (see plan sheets 8 and 9). The construction and planting work of these nine years culminated in the completion of the park and the official opening of the park to the public on September 26, 1936.

In 1928, U.S. Grant III, Charles Moore, Mary Henderson, and others testified to Congress that more money was needed to finish the park, and that the average yearly appropriation of \$24,615 between 1924 and 1927 was not sufficient to complete the project. U.S. Grant III suggested that \$100,000 to \$125,000 be appropriated annually until the park was completed, and Congress responded with a \$92,554 appropriation for 1928. Between 1928 and 1932, a total of \$500,000 was expended on the park, enabling completion of major structural elements including the great terrace, the great wall, and the cascades.¹

In 1928, Horace Peaslee completed, and the Commission approved, plans for the great wall and the great terrace, including a design for a fountain niche to replace the abandoned 16th Street terrace entrance (see figures 38 and 39).² Construction plans and details for the lower plaza were also completed and sent to bid. Two of the design decisions made in the lower plaza at this time were significant: 1) a decision on the color for the inside of the cascades pools and reflecting pool, and 2) changes to the form of the exedra. Peaslee desired a “mossy” color for the pools, which would provide an “old rustic effect” on the pools and in the reflection in the water.³ In correspondence with the Lammens Company, it was deter-



Figure 38: Conceptual model of 16th Street niche (RCP-CRF, c. 1927-1935).



Figure 39: 16th Street niche as constructed (RCP-CRF, September 21, 1936.)

1 HABS, p. 24; District of Columbia Appropriation Bill, 1928.

2 *Ibid.*

mined that the color should be added to the outer cement layer lining the pool, or if the pool had already been constructed, a stain could be added directly to the surface of the concrete.⁴

Peaslee's approved plan of 1920 and subsequent modifications had shown the exedra as a walled apse. Peaslee felt, and the Commission agreed with him, that in order for the exedra to serve as a suitable location for the Armillary Sphere and as a terminus for the cascades, the character of the exedra should be changed "from a walled structure to a parapet."⁵ The form of the exedra was changed to a "near semi-circle" with a backdrop of "alternating solid panels with seats and open balustrade sections, similar to the Villa Borghesi in Rome."⁶ The pillars between the balustrades held planting urns as a decorative feature (see figures 40 and 41), and the two end points of the exedra were punctuated with obelisks.

Meanwhile, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks submitted the planting plan for the lower gardens of the park to the Commission of Fine Arts on April 20, 1928. The plan was based on Vitale's 1920 plan and "in general, the types and heights of plants selected were similar in character to those used in the original planting plan."⁷ At this time, "Mr. Vitale recommended the substitution of *Pyracantha coccinea* for *Tilia vulgaris*...in the kidney shaped soil pockets...facing the southeast and southwest corner entrances formed by the intersection of W Street with 15th and



Figure 40: View of exedra showing the placement of planting urns around the perimeter of the exedra (RCP-CRF, no date).

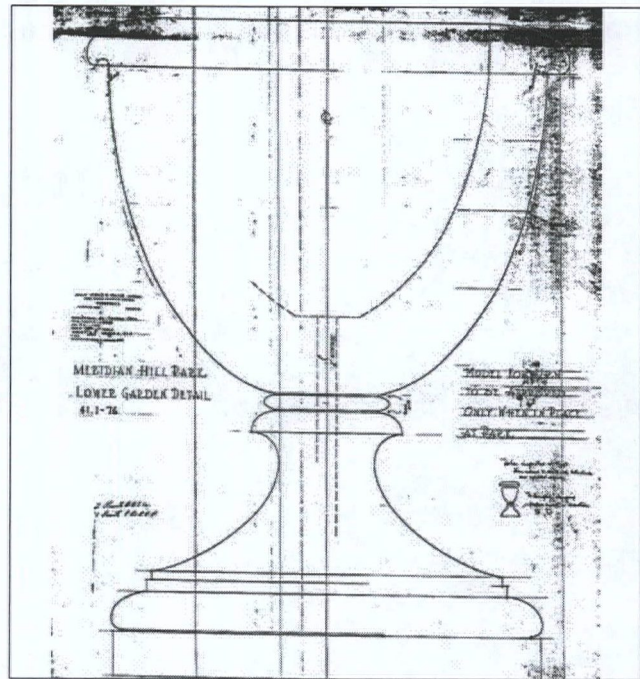


Figure 41: Original full size detail of the exedra planting urns designed by Peaslee in 1928 (National Archives, RG 79, 41.1-76).

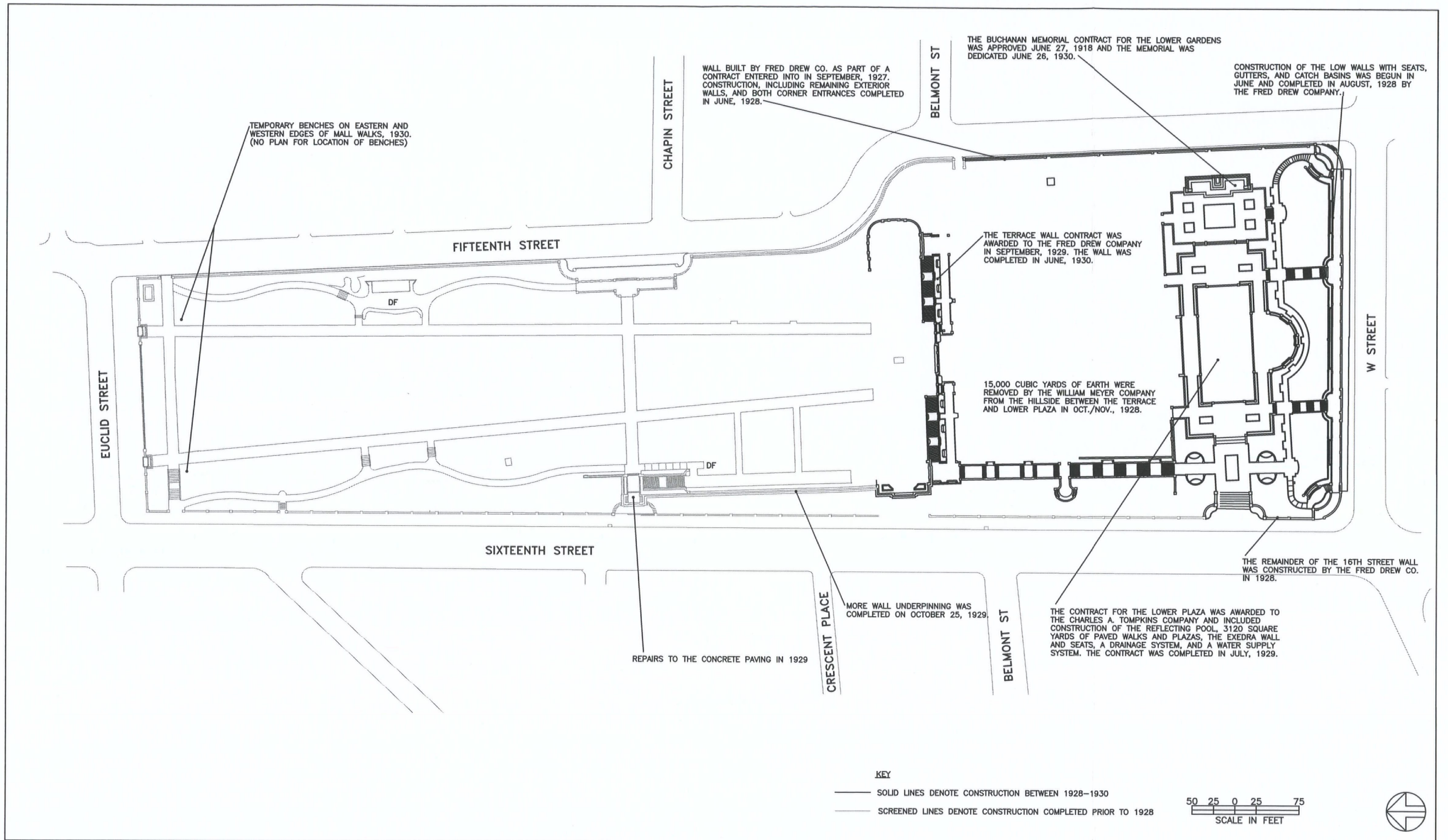
3 Horace Peaslee to U. S. Grant, III, 22 August 1928.

4 Robert B. Lammens, The Lammens Process Company of Los Angeles, California, to Horace Peaslee, 16 August 1928. Robert B. Lammens also stated in this letter that he "...invented and worked out the chemical staining of cement in 1916..." It is not known if Lammens was hired to provide the recipe for concrete staining of the pools nor if this technique was in fact used. However, whether through age or staining during construction, the cascade basins today have a softly mossy color.

5 CFA Minutes, 24 May 1928.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service — National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

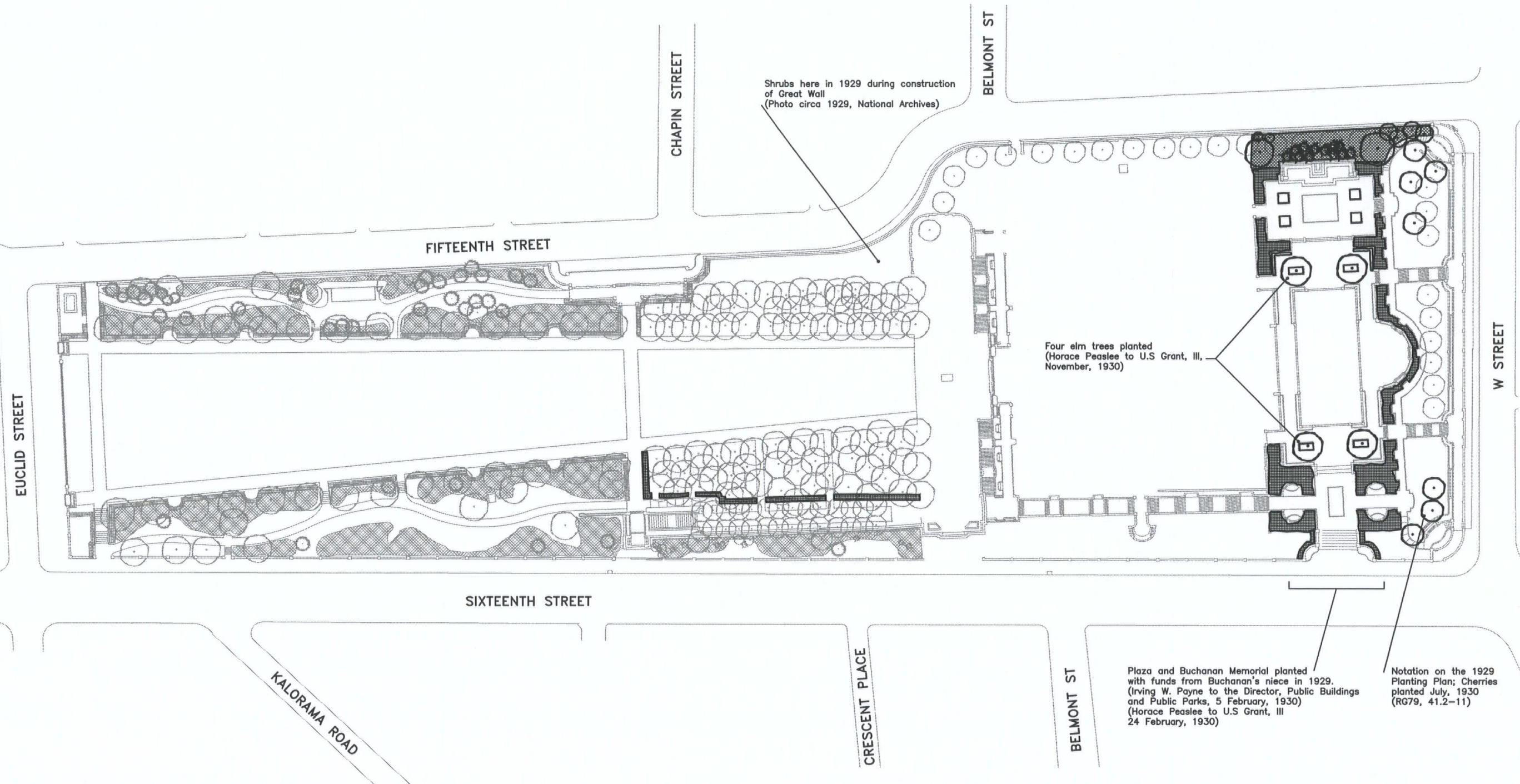
DRAWN BY:
MACS

CONSTRUCTION 1928-1930

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

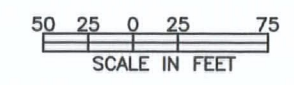
DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 8



- KEY**
- | | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| ○ DECIDUOUS TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD | □ GRASS | □ BLACK FOR NEW GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES FOR THE TIME PERIOD |
| ● EVERGREEN TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD | □ GROUND COVER | □ SCREENED SYMBOL FOR GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES PREDATING THE TIME PERIOD |
| ○ DECIDUOUS TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD | ■ SHRUB MASS | |
| ● EVERGREEN TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD | ■ HEDGE | |

NOTE:
SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS
AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

PLANTING 1928-1930

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 9

16th Streets.”⁸ In addition, Vitale recommended the use of Truedwarf Box (*Buxus sempervirens* ‘Truedwarf’) at the 16th Street entrance to the Lower Plaza. These shrubs were specified to be 2 to 3 feet taller to the right of the entrance versus the left to “overcome the visual illusion of height differences in the elevation of the entrance piers and walls.”⁹ With these changes, the plan and a complete plant list were submitted by the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks in November, 1929, and were approved by the Commission.¹⁰ This was the planting plan for the lower plaza that was ultimately implemented in two phases; the northern portion surrounding the reflecting pool in 1929 (see plan sheet 9) and the portions fronting on W Street in 1932.

The approved 1929 plan for the lower plaza (see figures 43 and 44) maintained the planting concept of the original 1919 approved plan, with more richness and detail added to the selection of plants. The formal, clipped American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) hedges surrounding the plaza, were retained although they did not extend in an arch over the walkways to W Street as illustrated in the 1920 plan. They were specified as 6 foot tall hedge plants in the plant list, although a photograph from 1931 indicates that the immature plants were between 4 and 5 feet tall at that time (see figure 42).¹¹ There was some discussion regarding Vitale’s suggestion of changing American Hornbeam to American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) in these locations as the holly would provide a stronger background color, however this change was not implemented.¹²

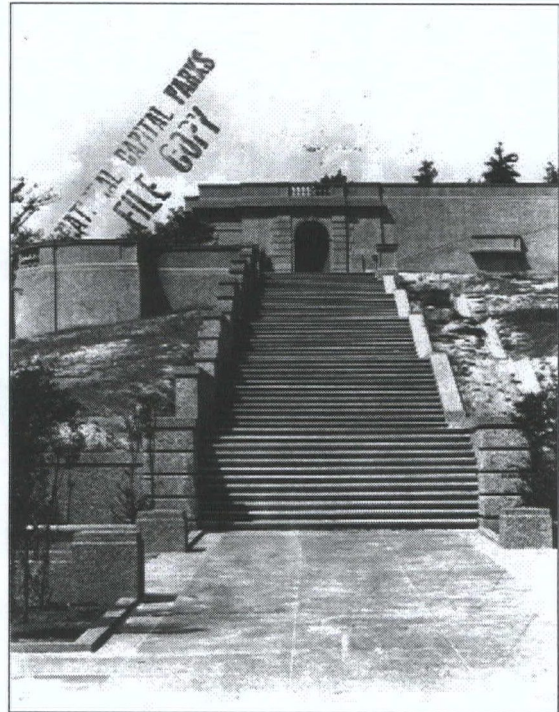


Figure 42: West ascent through the hillside gardens looking north from the lower plaza. Plants (just visible at the sides of the photo) located on either side of the bottom of the ascent, at the lower plaza, are immature American Hornbeam hedge, approximately 4 to 5 feet in height (RCP-CRF, August 26, 1931).

Surrounding the Buchanan Memorial, the planting scheme continues the 1920 design of framing with Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) and Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*). The existing line of trees to the south of the exedra labeled for removal on the 1920 plan was also indicated on the 1929 plan as Lindens (*Tilia americana*), and contrary to the original directions to remove them all, only four of the ten were designated for removal in the 1929 plan, with six remaining. The large specimen American Elm trees (*Ulmus americana*) at the W Street entrances to the lower plaza were again specified in the plan, as were the Flowering Dogwoods (*Cornus*

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 Irving W. Payne, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, to the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks (memo), 5 February 1930.

11 24 August 1931, and 26 August 1931 photographs of the lower plaza (RCP-CRF).

12 Horace Peaslee to H.P. Caemmerer, Commission of Fine Arts, 21 February 1930; Irving W. Payne to the Director, Public Buildings and Public Parks (memo), 5 February 1930.

Figure 43: plant list for figure 44, 1929 final comprehensive planting plan for the lower plaza area.

LIST OF SHRUBS -- LOWER GARDEN MERIDIAN HILL PARK.

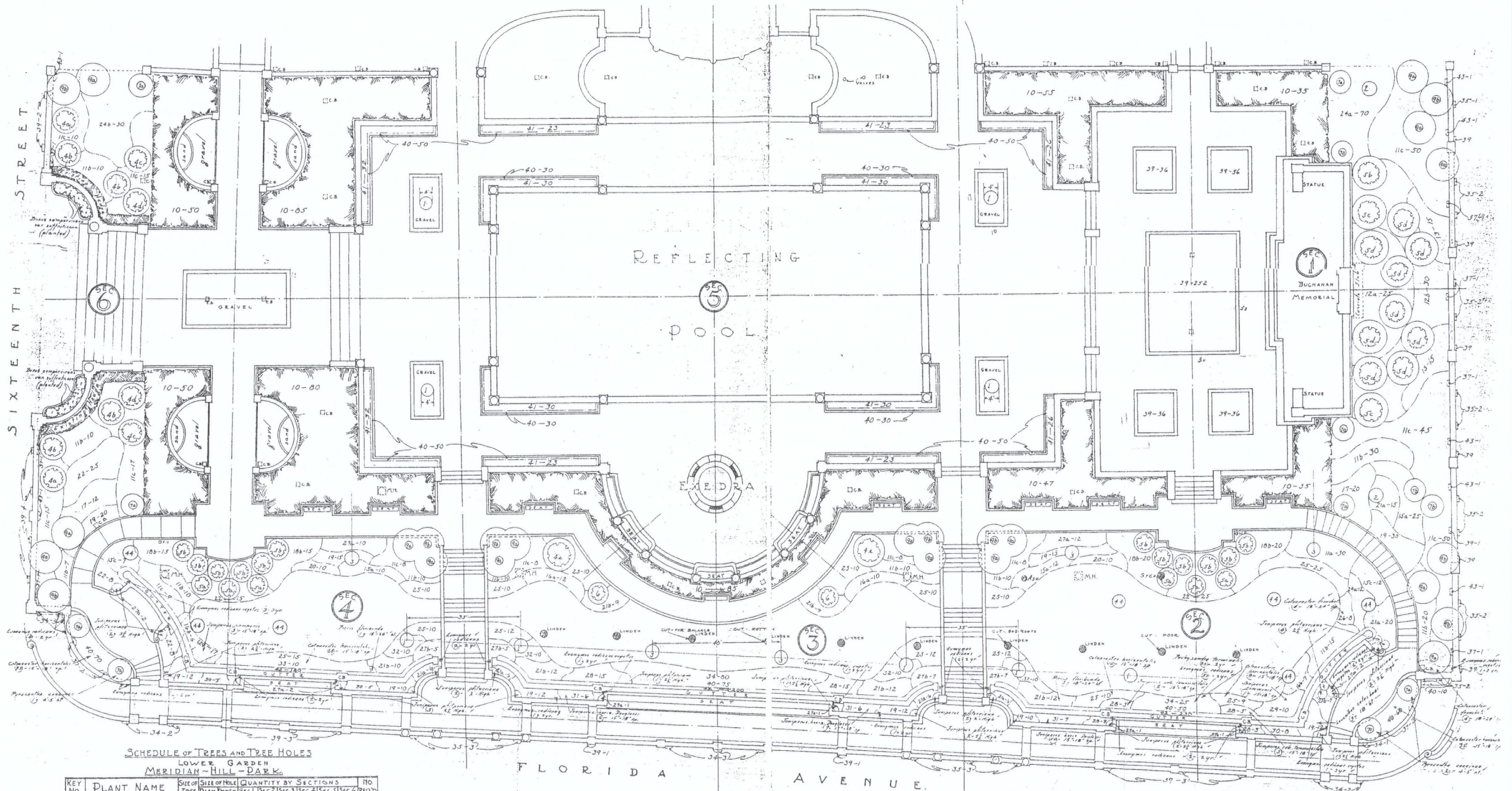
KEY NO.	SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	SIZE	QUANTITIES BY SECTION						TOTAL
			SEC 1	SEC 2	SEC 3	SEC 4	SEC 5	SEC 6	
10	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i> American hornbeam	6'	172				350		522
11a	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i> Mountain laurel	10-24"	30						30
11b	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i> Mountain laurel	2-3'	30	25	20	20		27	142
11c	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i> Mountain laurel	3-4'	145	6	16	17		37	243
12a	<i>Rhododendron maximum</i> Rosebay rhododendron	5-6'	25						25
12b	<i>Rhododendron maximum</i> Rosebay rhododendron	4-5'	30						30
13	<i>Rhododendron corymbosum</i> Catawba rhododendron	3-3 1/2'	30						30
14	<i>Asalea amoena</i> Amoena azalea	15-18"							
15a	<i>Asalea indica alba</i> White indica azalea	15-18"	25	12		10			47
15b	<i>Asalea indica alba</i> White indica azalea	10-24"							
15c	<i>Asalea indica alba</i> White indica azalea	2-2 1/2'		12		7			19
16a	<i>Asalea indica rosea</i> Pink indica azalea	10-24"			22				22

KEY NO.	SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	SIZE	QUANTITIES BY SECTION						TOTAL
			SEC 1	SEC 2	SEC 3	SEC 4	SEC 5	SEC 6	
16b	<i>Asalea indica rosea</i> Pink indica azalea	2-2 1/2'		7		6			13
17	<i>Asalea grandiflora superba</i> Superba azalea	15-18"	20						20
18a	<i>Ilex crenata</i> Japanese holly	15-18"							
18b	<i>Ilex crenata</i> Japanese holly	10-24"		40		30			70
19	<i>Leucothoe catesbaei</i> Drooping leucothoe	10"	30	37	24	37		20	148
20	<i>Pieris floribunda</i> Mountain andromeda	12-15"		10		10			20
21a	<i>Pieris floribunda</i> Mountain andromeda	15-18"	15	24	12	6			57
21b	<i>Pieris floribunda</i> Mountain andromeda	10-24"		19	42	10			71
22	<i>Pieris japonica</i> Japanese andromeda	10"		25		31		25	81
23	<i>Abutilon grandiflora</i> Silky cotton	2-2 1/2'			20				20

KEY NO.	SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	SIZE	QUANTITIES BY SECTION						TOTAL
			SEC 1	SEC 2	SEC 3	SEC 4	SEC 5	SEC 6	
24a	<i>Myrica caroliniana</i> Southern waxmyrtle	2-3'	70	16					86
24b	<i>Myrica caroliniana</i> Southern waxmyrtle	3-4'						30	30
25	<i>Coleonaster franchetii</i> Rock coleonaster	10-16"		66	44	35			145
26	<i>Coleonaster franchetii</i> Rock coleonaster	10-24"		8					8
27a	<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i> Phoenicea juniper	2-2 1/2'		16	2	14			32
27b	<i>Juniperus phoenicea</i> Phoenicea juniper	10-24"		7	12	5			24
28	<i>Juniperus sibirica</i> Siberian juniper	15-18"		18	30				48
29	<i>Juniperus communis</i> Common juniper	10-15"		10		17			27
30	<i>Juniperus depressa plumosa</i> Purple spreading juniper	15-18"		6		10			16
31	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i> Horizontal juniper	10-18"		7	12				19

KEY NO.	SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAME	SIZE	QUANTITIES BY SECTION						TOTAL
			SEC 1	SEC 2	SEC 3	SEC 4	SEC 5	SEC 6	
32	<i>Taxus canadensis</i> American yew	10-18"		10	20	10			40
33	<i>Rosa wichuriana</i> Wichuriana rose	2 ym				10			10
34	<i>Eonymus radicans</i> Winter creeper	2 ym		20	63	5			116
35	<i>Eonymus radicans</i> Big leaf winter creeper	3 ym		11	4	3	1		19
36	<i>Eonymus radicans</i> European bitter-sweet	3 ym							
37	<i>Wisteria chinensis</i> Chinese wisteria	3 ym		4	2	2		3	11
38	<i>Ilex microphylla</i> Dwarf holly	10-18"							
39	<i>Hedera helix</i> English ivy	4' pole	402	3	2	3		6	416
40	<i>Pachysandra terminalis</i> Pachysandra	2 ym		126	75	70	320		591
41	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> Common boxwood	10"					326		326
42	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i> Hickory	6-9"		230	200	100			530
43	<i>Aspidistra arguta</i> Silver-leafed fern	3 ym		5				2	7
44	<i>Eonymus alatus</i> Spiny dogwood	3 ym		1		1			2

Figure 44: (following) The 1929 final comprehensive planting plan for the lower plaza area. Construction of the lower plaza was completed in 1929. This plan further details the hedge massing around the plaza, the addition of planting beds in the Buchanan plaza, the plantings in the border areas behind the Buchanan memorial and between the lower plaza and W and 16th Streets, and the use of gravel as a surface under the elms around the pool, in the panel at the 16th Street sub-plaza, and at the sand play areas. Most of the lindens along W Street proposed to be removed in the 1919 Vitale plan for this area are still present. This drawing shows the final lower plaza design as it was built including the simple reflecting pool with its corner planting strips, the final form of the exedra, bench locations, the corner entrances at W and 15th and 16th Streets, and even catch basins in the planting areas. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-11).



SCHEDULE OF TREES AND TREE HOLES
LOWER GARDEN
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

KEY NO.	PLANT NAME	SIZE OF TREE	SIZE OF HOLE		QUANTITY BY SECTIONS						NO. REQ'D
			DIAM	DEPTH	SEC.1	SEC.2	SEC.3	SEC.4	SEC.5	SEC.6	
1	Ulmus americana	3" cal.	4"	2'		2	2	1	1		9
2	Quercus rubra	2" cal.	4"	2'	2						2
3	Quercus alba	2" cal.	4"	2'		2	2	1			5
4a	Juniperus Virginiana	8"	4"	2'						2	2
4b	"	10"	4"	2'						2	4
4c	"	12"	4"	2'						2	2
4d	"	14"	4"	2'						2	2
4e	"	15"	4"	2'			2				2
5a	Tsuga canadensis	8"	4"	2'		3			3		6
5b	"	10"	4"	2'	1	6			6		13
5c	"	12"	4"	2'	2						2
5d	"	14"	4"	2'	9						9
6	Pinus montana	4"	3"	2'			2				2
7a	Pyracantha coccinea	4-5"	2"	2'	4	2		2		2	10
7b	"	3-4"	2"	2'	2						2
9a	Cornus florida	8"	3"	2'	5	2	4	2		3	16
9b	"	10"	3"	2'	3	1	2	1		2	9

44 Japanese flowering cherry trees moved from A.M.B. and planted July, 1930.

PLANTING BEDS

FIRST NUMBER IN THE BED INDICATES THE KIND OF PLANT TO BE USED IN EACH SPACE.
SECOND NUMBER IN THE BED INDICATES THE ESTIMATED QUANTITY OF PLANTS REQUIRED.

SOIL

SOIL FOR PLANTING BEDS IS TO BE 15" BELOW THE FINISHED GRADE.

NOTE: REVISIONS:-

ALL MATERIAL DESIGNATED BY NAME IN SECTIONS 2, 3 & 4 TO BE PLANTED SPRING, 1932. FIRST NUMBER, IN CIRCLE, INDICATES QUANTITY - SECOND NUMBER, INDICATES SIZE. 5-10-32.

NOTE

INDICATES EXISTING TREES.

BROKEN LINES INDICATES PLANTING BEDS.

THIS PLAN WAS TRACED FROM PHOTOSTAT, REDUCTION OF DRAWING NO. 413-143.

OFFICE PUBLIC BUILDINGS & PUBLIC PARKS OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL	
MERIDIAN HILL PARK	
Revisions Loc. Number Date Sec. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Check these pages	PLANTING PLAN LOWER GARDEN: Scale 1" = 10'-0"
Submitted 10/1/32 Checked 10/1/32 Drawn 10/1/32	APPROVED: <i>W. H. H. H.</i> OCT. 24, 1932 DIRECTOR
Drawn 10/1/32 Checked 10/1/32 Drawn 10/1/32	FILE NO. 412-11

Figure 44

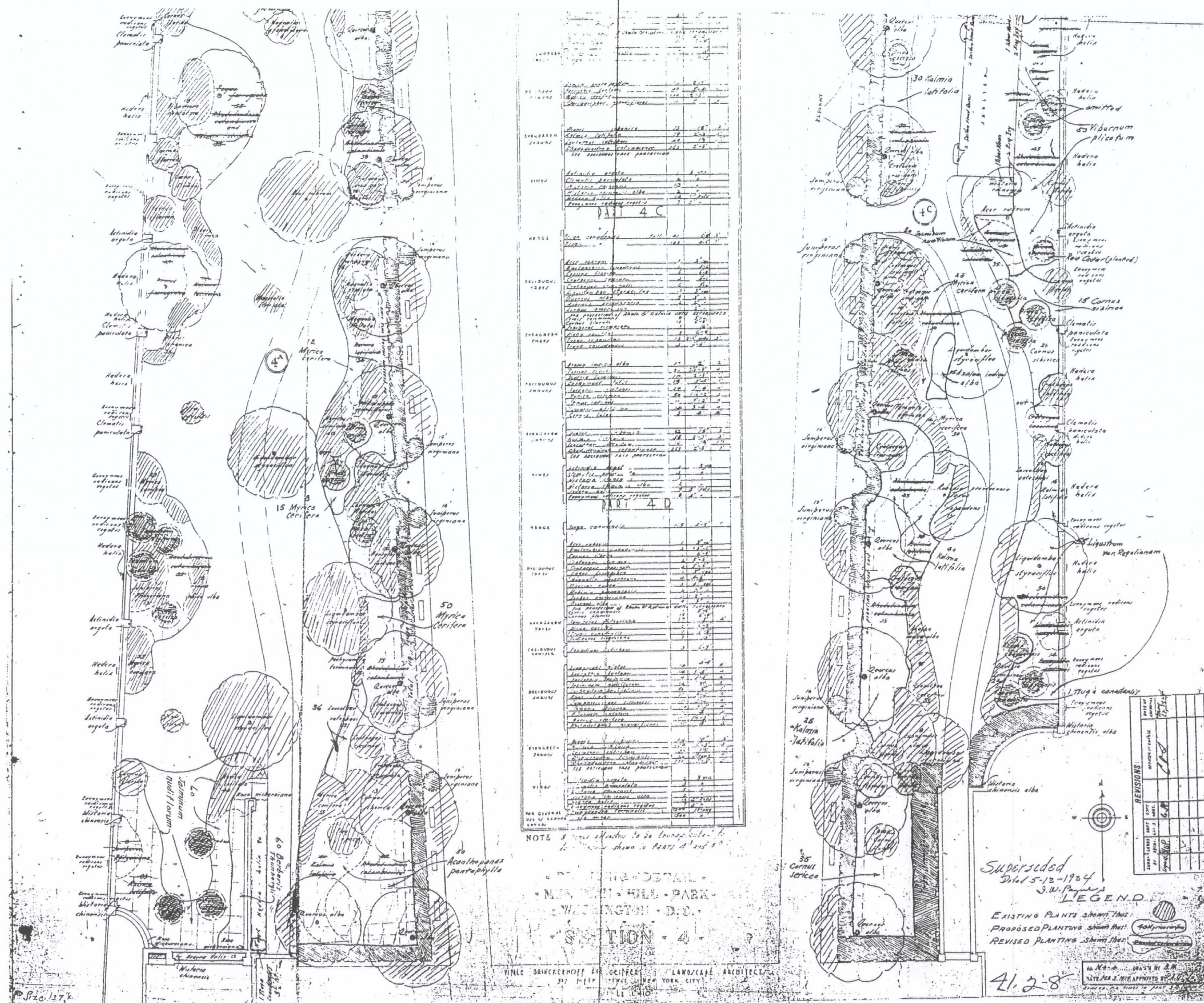


Figure 31

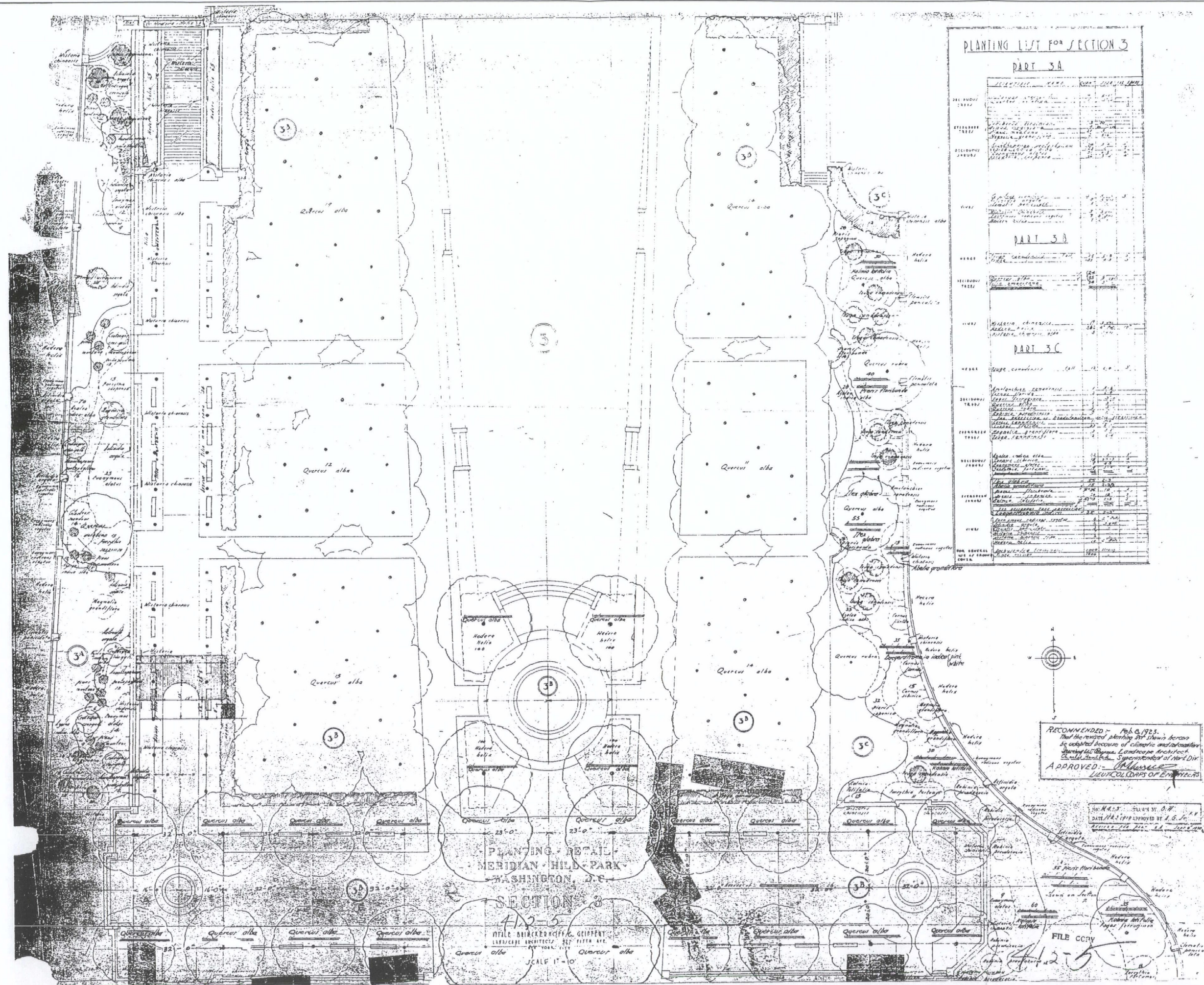


Figure 32

Construction Progress

At the same time that planting plans were being prepared for the park, construction on the upper level continued. Grading in the upper level of the park began in July, 1918, and was completed in April of 1919.²¹ Work continued in 1919 on the grading, walls, and drainage system of the upper level of the park along with the completion of the planting beds along 16th Street in the upper level.

During the summer of 1919, construction began on the Roosevelt apartment/hotel located just south of the park across W Street. This construction sparked a discussion about the regulation of building heights adjacent to the park, particularly to the south where the view of the city from the great terrace could be obscured. At the time, the allowable height of apartment buildings along 16th Street was 85 feet, 11 feet higher than the elevation of the main terrace walk. Therefore, the Commission recommended that at least one story should be eliminated from the Roosevelt and any other building to be constructed directly south of the park. On September 4, 1919, a bill was introduced before Congress that would have regulated the height of buildings south of Meridian Hill Park to 75 feet.²² The bill did not pass, and as a result the Roosevelt was built to a height of 85 feet.

By 1921, much of the seeding, planting, and walk construction above the 16th Street wall was complete, along with the preparation of the planting beds between Belmont and Chapin Streets. The Commission of Fine Arts also approved a shelter along the 15th Street side of the park.²³

Between December, 1921 and May, 1923, the first three memorials were placed in the park, marking a trend that was to become a contentious issue for Peaslee and the Commission of Fine Arts: a statue of Joan of Arc (see figure 34), a statue of Dante (see figure 35), and a plaque placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution. While a site for the Buchanan Memorial had been a part of the design for Meridian Hill Park from its inception, this was not the case with subsequent statuary. As described in the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Report, each of the memorials “had been approved by Congress for location on government grounds: sometimes within Meridian Hill Park, sometimes on public grounds within the city of Washington....whether the sculpture was deemed appropriate or not, the Fine Arts Commission and the

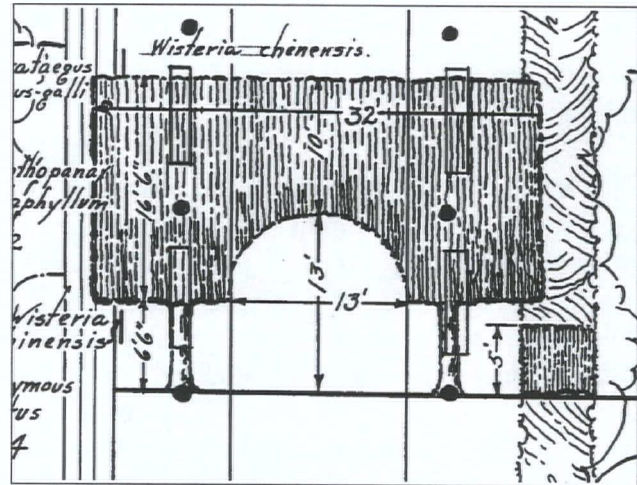


Figure 29: Enlargement of section of Vitale's 1919 planting plan for the great terrace and southern portion of the mall showing pleaching of the Linden Allee from figure 32. The Lindens were to have been formally clipped to 23 feet in height with a 13 foot high archway clipped in the center of the walkway. This detail appeared on all the subsequent and revised planting plans, but there is no evidence this clipping was ever implemented. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-5).

21 Report to the Chief of Engineers, Meridian Hill Park, 1918.

22 66th Congress, 1st Session, 1919. S. 2945, A bill regulating the height of buildings that may be erected on land fronting Meridian Hill Park on the south.

23 CFA Minutes, 9 June 1921.

architect were required to find a place for it.”²⁴ By 1930, Peaslee proposed limiting memorials to designed urns to be placed on pedestals in niches of the eight foot high hemlock hedge bordering the Mall.²⁵

On December 1, 1921, a statue to Dante Alighieri (see figure 35), located along the east ascent at the eastern terminus of the cascade cross axis, was dedicated, the 600th anniversary of the poet's birth.²⁶ The bronze figure was given to the United States on behalf of all Italian-Americans by Carlo Barsotti, editor of an Italian-American newspaper in New York City. The statue, which is a replica of one unveiled the same year in New York City, was sculpted by Ettore Ximenes of Rome, and shows Dante wearing a scholar's gown, a laurel wreath crown, and holding a book, labeled *Commedia*, to represent his *La Divina Commedia*. The monument stands on a pedestal of sea-green granite from Rockport, Maine, the base of which is inscribed with the word “Dante” on the front and “Dante Alighieri, Presented to the City of Washington in behalf of the Italians in the United States” on the east side.

Nearly two years later the location of the Dante statue in Meridian Hill Park was still referred to in the press as temporary.²⁷ However, the 4th of September *Star* reported “Drop Plans To Move Statue of Dante.” The article said that a statue of Francis Asbury would be located at 16th and Mount Pleasant Streets instead of Dante who was to remain in Meridian Hill Park. “A handsome granite pedestal will be provided for the Dante statue near its present temporary site....”

On January 6, 1922, a bronze statue of Joan of Arc was dedicated in a ceremony presided over by Madame Jules Jusserand, the wife of the French Ambassador to the United States, representing France, Mme Carlo Poliferno, president of the Societe des Femmes de France of New York, who donated the statue, and First Lady Mrs. Warren Harding representing the United States.²⁸

The statue was located in the center of the great terrace of Meridian Hill Park, facing south on the central axis of the park. Sculpted by Paul Dubois, the 10 foot long, 9 foot high bronze equestrian statue depicts Joan of Arc seated on horseback, sword drawn, presumably leading her French troops into battle against the Burgundians. The statue was cast under the direction of the Ministere des Beaux Arts in Paris and is a copy of the original located in front of Rheims Cathedral in France.²⁹

24 HABS, p. 34.

25 Peaslee to U.S. Grant, 22 January 1930; HABS p. 35.

26 HABS, p. 32.

27 Evening Star, 2 September 1923. A photo titled: *New Location Ordered for Dante Statue* “The bronze figure of the author of the ‘Divine Comedy,’ which now occupies a temporary setting in Meridian Hill Park will soon be transferred to a permanent site at the intersection of 16th and Mount Pleasant Streets.”

28 HABS, p. 32.

29 The 6 foot high pedestal, designed by McKim, Meade, and White, Architects, is granite from Rockport, Maine, and has several inscriptions. On the front is inscribed: “Jeanne D Arc, Liberatrice, 1412-1431, Aux Femmes De Amerique, Les Femmes De France” (Joan of Arc, Liberator, 1412-1431, To the Women of America, From the Women of France). On the north side is inscribed: “Offert Par Les Lyceum, Societe des Femmes De France A New York, Le 6 Janvier 1922” (Given by The Lyceum, Society of the Women of France of New York, January 6, 1922).

On February 14, 1922, the Army and Navy Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution made a request to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds to place a tablet on the south wall of the main 16th Street entrance to Meridian Hill Park to mark the location of the United States meridian, as proposed on early maps of the new Nation's Capital. This request was approved by the office, and on May 2, 1923, a 24 by 18 inch cast-bronze plaque was dedicated. The plaque read, "The Stone Marking the Washington Meridian Was Formerly Located 52 Feet 9 Inches West of This Tablet," the approximate center of 16th Street. Present at the ceremony were Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook, President of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Assistant Secretary of War Davis, and Colonel C.O. Sherrill.³⁰



Figure 34: Joan of Arc, with sword, was in place by 1922 (RCP-CRF, January 11, 1966).



Figure 35: Statue of Dante was in place by 1921 (RCP-CRF, no date).

The year 1923 was significant in the history of Meridian Hill Park. That year the upper park was completed and officially opened to the public even though the northern part of the mall had been in use since 1921. The 15th Street lodge was begun in 1923 and completed in 1924 as a permanent shelter with toilet facilities (see figures 36 and 37). Grading, soil, and seeding between Belmont and Chapin Streets was completed. However, the great terrace was not completed and opened to the public until over a decade later, in 1936.³¹

The lodge was variously called a "comfort station" and a "shelter and temporary park lodge." The exact nature of the temporary status of the lodge is not known. The center section of the

30 Evening Star, 3 May 1923.

31 Annual Reports of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of National Capital Parks.

structure that housed Park Police was removed in 1936. Other quarters had been provided for the Park Police under the great terrace stairs, completed by 1930.

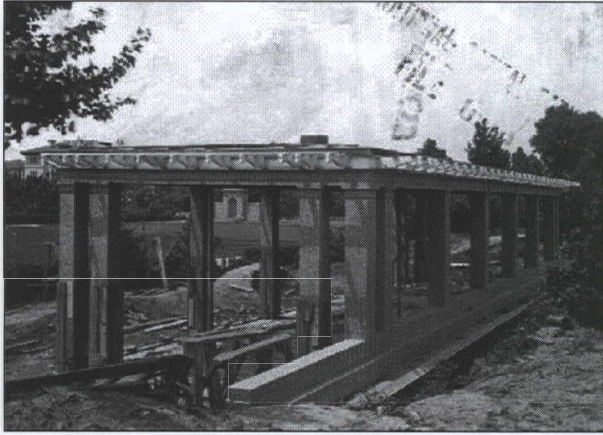


Figure 36: Construction of shelter on 15th Street side of park, (RCP-CRF, July, 1923).

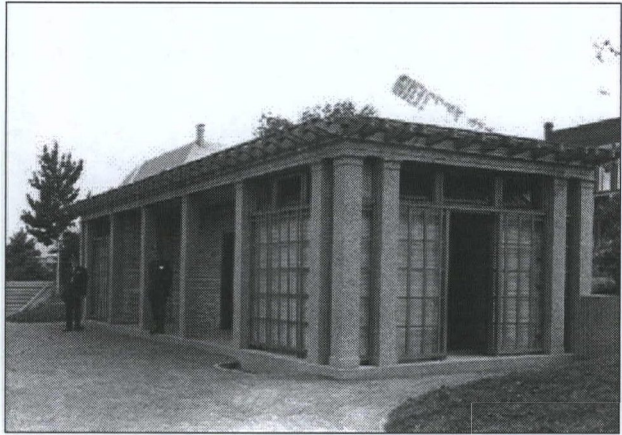


Figure 37: Comfort station and park shelter in upper park, (RCP-CRF, no date).



Figure 37a: View north toward Joan of Arc statue, in place by January of 1922. The mall walks were largely complete by this date. This view shows how the future hillside gardens and lower plaza area looked from 1923 to about 1928, when construction resumed

2.4 1924 - 1927

The years 1924 through 1927 mark a transitional period for Meridian Hill Park. It is a time when little construction took place on the park, but it is also a period when several important design decisions were made, leading up to the next major phase of construction between 1928 and 1935. During this period, attention moved away from the mall and to the lower plaza, cascades, and hillside gardens of the park.

In March of 1924, the District Commissioners indicated that it was important to widen 15th Street to accommodate more vehicular two-way traffic. Peaslee and the Commission of Fine Arts agreed that the elimination of the sidewalk along the eastern side of the park, along with cutting back the south-east corner, would solve the widening problem without requiring the removal of the portion of the wall already built.¹

Another issue involved the design and height of the wall along W Street. After repeated sketches and site visits, the Commission directed Peaslee to remove the two gates on W Street and to design a wall not to exceed six feet in height.² However, even this height was too much for Congress who, in 1927, opposed the design of the wall on the grounds that it was large, obtrusive, and "offensive to pedestrians on W Street."³ Therefore, Congress made the decision to limit the height of the wall to "4'-6" with an open balustrade above."⁴ The impact of the wall was further lessened by adding corner entrances, "joined inside the park by a walkway."⁵ "The resolution of this difference with Congress was apparently important to the resolution of funding problems."⁶

The primary reason so little construction took place in this time period was lack of funding. Between 1924 and 1927, a total of only \$98,460 was appropriated by Congress for Meridian Hill Park, averaging only \$24,615 each year.⁷ In February 1927, the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, Mr. Moore, went before the Subcommittee on Appropriations of the Senate District Committee with a plea for increased funds for 1928 so the lower gardens could be completed. Congress responded by increasing funding to \$92,554. However, this was less than one-fifth of

1 Record Card, Engineer Department, U.S. Army, between 16 June and October 27, 1924.

2 Record Card, Engineer Department, U.S. Army, 17 March 1924; 19 March 1924; 24 March 1924; 25 March 1924.

3 HABS, p. 23.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 HABS, p. 36.

the \$500,000 needed to complete the gardens and retaining walls in the lower part of the park, and the actual funds did not become available until after 1927.⁸

In July, 1925, sculptor Jose Clara's seated, marble figure "Serenity" was placed in the informal area west of the main mall. A memorial to Lieutenant Commander William Henry Schultze, United States Navy, the statue is one of an identical pair; the other is in Luxembourg, and is known by its Spanish title, *Serenidad*. Clara carved the five and a half foot-high statue out of a single block of white marble, depicting a woman in Classical garb, seated in a casual position. Inscribed on the front of the pedestal is "Serenity, In Remembrance of William Henry Schultze, Lieutenant Commander United States Navy." The memorial was presented as a gift to the people of the United States by Charles Deering, a longtime friend and classmate of Schultze's at the U.S. Naval Academy. In 1922, the Commission of Fine Arts had been approached regarding the type of memorial to Schultze that was preferred for the city of Washington. They approved the concept of an ideal figure rather than a portrait statue: "...there is precedent in this respect in the erection of the Butt-Millet Fountain, the Dupont Fountain, and the McMillan Fountain, and that it is very important that the ideal figure in sculpture have the proper landscape."⁹ Following Congress's resolution to accept the statue,¹⁰ the Commission made the decision that the statue should be placed in Meridian Hill Park "near the Sixteenth Street entrance, on the upper level, on a simple pedestal, 2'6" high, in the midst of planting, which is now a part of the landscape plan...."¹¹

In October of 1925 Irving Payne submitted a planting plan for the Serenity statue that he had designed that was approved by Colonel Sherrell. This plan used evergreen plants such as American hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), Japanese and dwarf English yew (*Taxus cuspidata* and *baccata repandens*), American holly (*Ilex opaca*), and several varieties of junipers as flanking and back-drop plantings for the statue with several lower varieties of junipers as foreground planting, and herbaceous ground covers such as periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) and Japanese spurge (*Pachysandra terminalis*) in between. A "Revised Planting Sketch" for Serenity prepared in August 1927 indicated that only a few of the yews and junipers remained. The fact that the missing plants are shown to be replaced with a thorny mass of Japanese quince (*Cydonia japonica*)¹² and a Washington and thicket hawthorn (*Crataegus cordata* and *coccinea*), rather than in-kind, indicates that vandalism and pedestrian trespass were already problems.

By the end of February, 1925, the park was considered 33 percent completed. The Report of the Engineers for 1925 details the work that had been completed thus far (see plan sheet 6): "the 16th Street lower retaining wall, with the exception of 160 feet at the south end; the upper wall fronting the highest part of the ground on 16th Street opposite Crescent Place; the arched entrance on 16th Street; grading of the level plateau extending from Euclid Street down to the arched entrance on 16th Street and between the walks paralleling 15th and 16th Streets; laying of

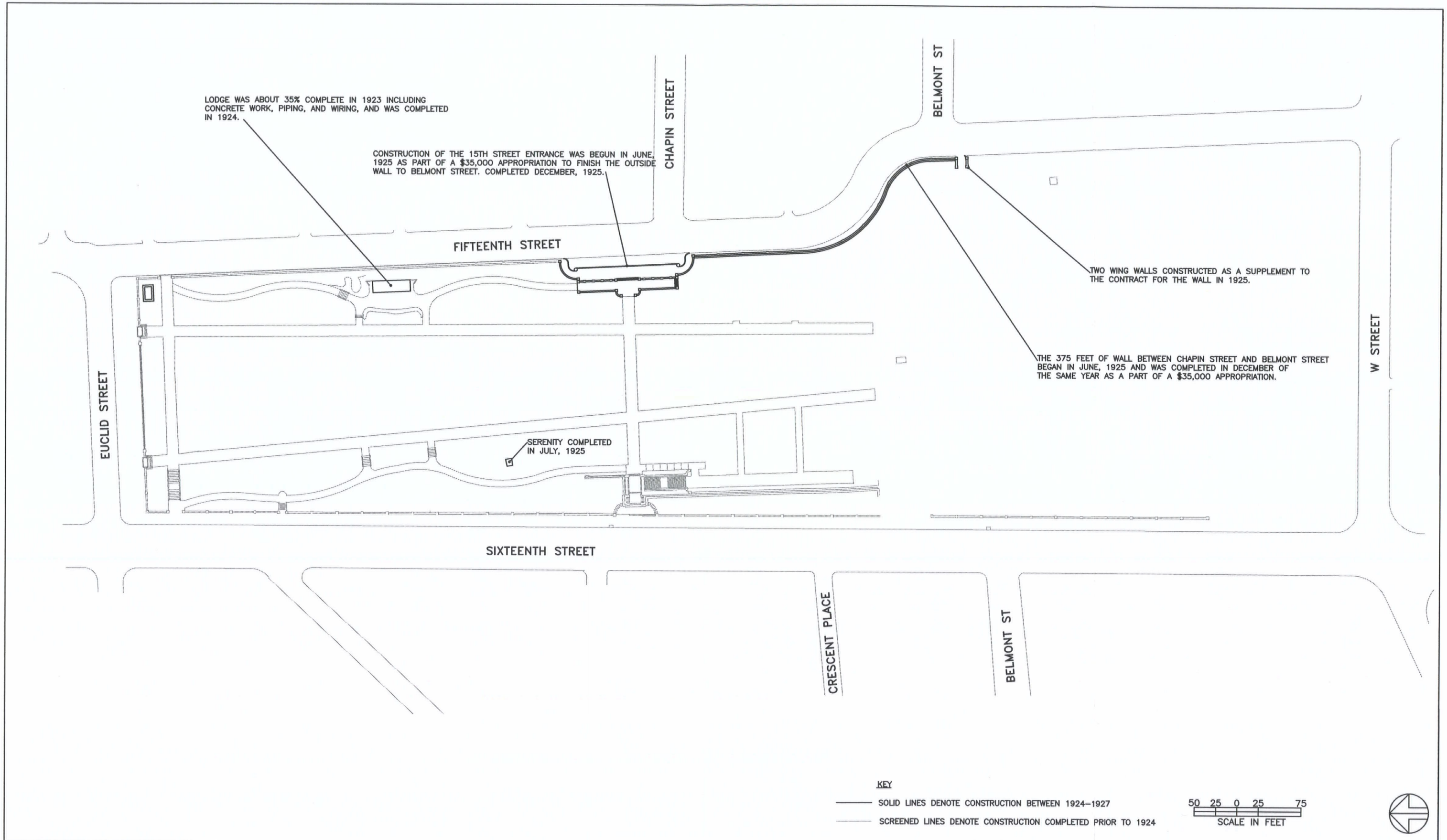
8 *Ibid.*

9 CFA Minutes, 7 September 1922.

10 Senate Joint Resolution, 43 Stat. 21, Chapter 53, approved 12 March 1924.

11 CFA Minutes, 23 April 1924. Some sources claim this to be the only privately funded memorial to a relatively obscure individual to be located in a federal/public park in the city. The specifics of how or why this came about are not known.

12 Today called *Chaenomeles japonica*.



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

CONSTRUCTION 1924-1927

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 6

concrete walks with vitrified brick edging;¹³ construction of a central panel of lawn with walks of concrete on both sides; preparation and planting of beds along the 16th Street side; installation of miscellaneous plantings at other places; installation of a drainage system for the walks; construction of an entrance at the north end of the retaining wall on 16th Street south of Euclid Street; construction of a concrete wall with iron grilles along Euclid Street, the walk along 15th Street from the Chapin Street entrance to Euclid Street, completion of the grading, soiling, and seeding of the upper end of the park; and construction of a comfort station and park shelter.”¹⁴ The rest of the plantings in the upper park, excluding the great terrace were installed between 1924 and 1927 (see plan sheet 7).¹⁵

According to the Annual Reports of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital Parks, plantings in the park in 1925 included 305 hardy vines, 672 evergreen shrubs, 250 deciduous shrubs, and 4,750 flowering bulbs.¹⁶ There is no information in the report as to where these plants were placed, however, since the lower park was not yet under construction, and notations on the 1924 revisions to Vitale's 1919 plan indicate plantings occurred in 1925 in the upper park, the assumption can be made that they were planted there.

In 1925, Horace Peaslee suggested that the extreme northeast corner of Meridian Hill Park be set aside as a sand play area. In 1926, construction continued in the park as the entrance to the lower park on 16th Street was built, along with a considerable section of the wall on 15th Street between Belmont and Chapin Streets. Unfortunately, Mr. Peaslee also received reports in 1926 that vandals had deliberately disturbed the plantings in the park, a problem that would continue to plague those responsible for planning and maintaining the park throughout its history.¹⁷

A memo written by Irving Payne and dated June 21, 1926 also provides some sketchy information on plantings at this time.¹⁸ The memo discussed the need to prune the wisteria growth between “the balustrade” assembly, referring to the 16th Street wall. The memo further recommended planting “Yelloweye Wisteria” to overhang the open stairway and in the planting pocket on the north side of the entrance. A reference in this memo is the first indication in the documents of a date for when the linden allee was planted. The memo calls for the allee to be clipped to achieve the arched treatment that Vitale had called for in his 1919 Planting Plan. Therefore the planting date can be pinpointed to the period between 1918 and 1926.

Payne's memo also indicates that there was difficulty in establishing vines on the 16th Street wall, apparently due to vandalism. Some success was indicated with English Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*) and Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*),

13 This may be an error in the Engineer's report as none of the concrete walks in the park today have brick edging. The only brick edging is at the steps in the asphalt walks in the areas to the east and west of the mall.

14 *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1925.*

15 Planting dates are based on a 1927 existing conditions plan (National Archives RG 79, 41-86 and 41-87) and notations on the 1924 revisions to Vitale's 1919 planting plan for the Upper Park (National Archives, RG 79, 41.2-8).

16 *Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital Parks, 1925.*

17 Peaslee to U.S. Grant III, 3 June 1926 as cited in HABS p. 23.

18 Irving W. Payne, Chief, Landscape Architecture Section to Chief, Design and Construction Division, Public Buildings and Public Parks, (Memo) 21 June 1926.

notwithstanding the problem of only six to eight inches of soil depth above wall footings, requiring regular watering by maintenance staff.¹⁹

In 1926 a controversy arose concerning Horace Peaslee's contract as architect of the park. It was during 1926 that Peaslee left the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds to open his own architectural practice, while still remaining chief architect of the park. After looking into the matter, U.S. Controller General McCarl determined there was some impropriety because Peaslee had started the plans for the park as an employee of the government and then moved over into private practice. McCarl held that since Peaslee took the park project from his government office to his private practice, his contract had been awarded without being opened up to the normal competitive process. According to McCarl, this constituted favoritism. He insisted that Peaslee could be paid for the work already done on the park, but that the government should not enter into any further contracts with his private practice.²⁰ However, after consideration, he was kept on as principal architect of Meridian Hill Park and remained so through the completion of the project.

During 1927, because of the limited money available for the improvement of the park, no new construction work was undertaken. However, according to a memo to the Commission of Fine Arts, a considerable amount of plant material was purchased for the lower portion of the park that year²¹ and placed in nurseries.²² Although there is no information as to the types and specific locations for the plants, the Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks states that during the autumn of 1927 these plants were set in the lower part of the park.²³

Although construction took a back seat during 1927, there were several important design decisions made during the year. Along with the decision by Congress to limit the height of the W Street wall (discussed earlier in this chapter), the Commission of Fine Arts decided to eliminate the elaborate entrance from 16th Street to the great terrace. Mr. Charles Platt of the Commission remarked that the plans for the entrance did not yet show how the entrance would connect with the great terrace, and the other Commission members agreed with Mr. Platt, feeling that access to the terrace from 16th Street at that point would be more detrimental than advantageous.²⁴

The year 1927 was also marked by the appointment of Ferruccio Vitale to the Commission of Fine Arts by President Calvin Coolidge. Vitale, chief designer for the planting plan for Meridian Hill Park since 1919, continued to take an active role in the development of the park while serving on the Commission.²⁵

19 *Ibid.*

20 "16th Street Park Contract Voided," *Evening Star*, 1 January 1922.

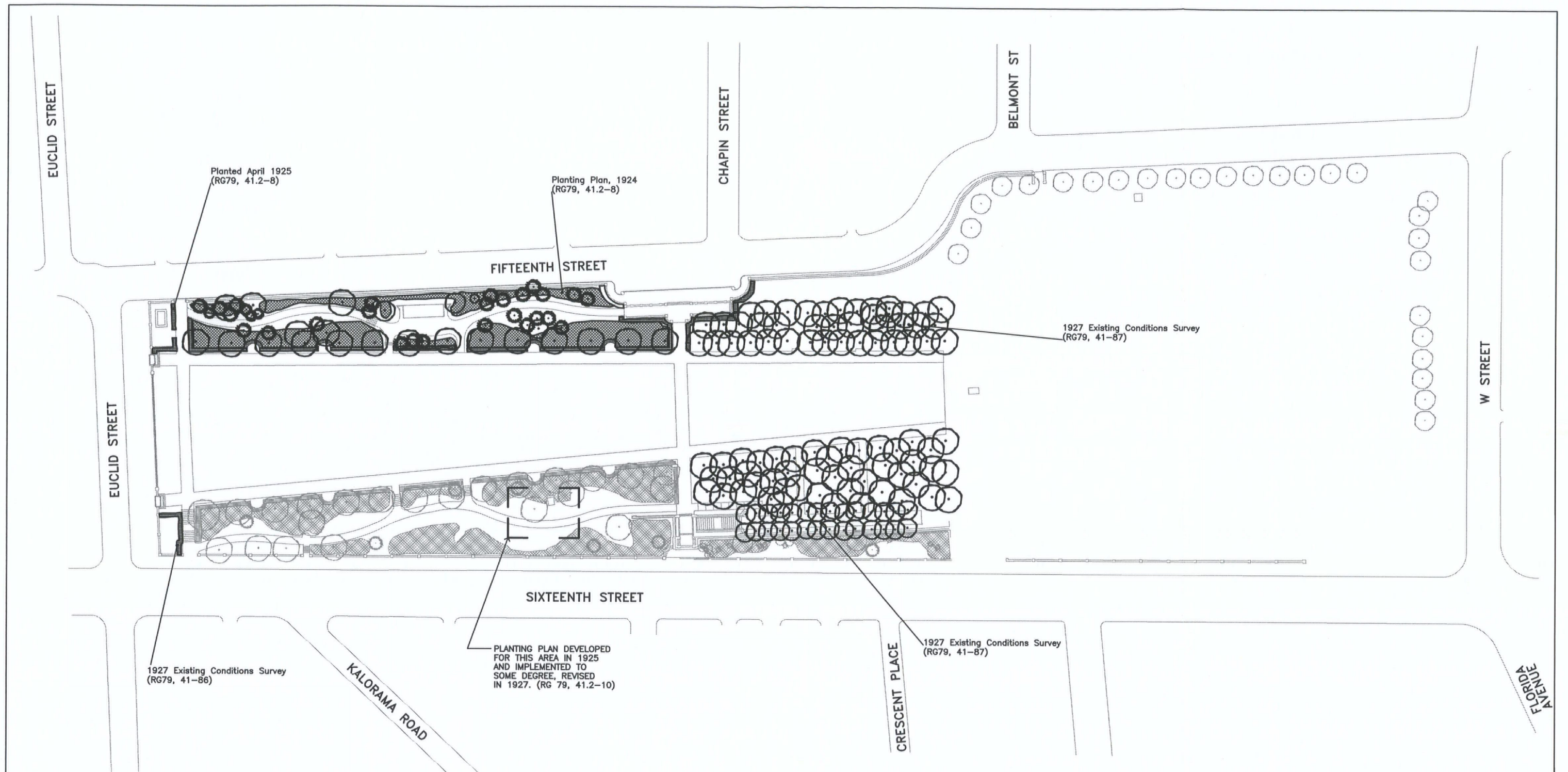
21 U.S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital to Charles Moore, Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, 23 March 1927.

22 Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital Parks, 1927.

23 *Ibid.*

24 HABS, p. 23.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 17. Vitale served on the CFA until 1932.



KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- EVERGREEN TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- DECIDUOUS TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD
- EVERGREEN TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD

- GRASS
- GROUND COVER
- SHRUB MASS
- HEDGE

- BLACK FOR NEW GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- SCREENED SYMBOL FOR GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES PREDATING THE TIME PERIOD

* BECAUSE THE UPPER PARK WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED IN 1923, IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT THESE AREAS WERE AT LEAST GRASSED (ALSO AS A PART OF ROUTINE CONTRACT CLOSE-OUT). BUT THERE IS NO DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF WHAT WAS ACTUALLY IN THESE LOCATIONS.

NOTE:
SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.

50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

PLANTING

1924-1927

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.

872
87141

SHEET 7

florida). A portion of the area under the trees to the south of the exedra was specified as groundcover, with shrub beds flanking all of the walls and walkways. Shrubs specified on the plan included Savin Juniper (*Juniperus sabina tamariscifolia*), Wintercreeper (*Euonymus radicans*), Mountain Andromeda (*Pieris floribunda*), Drooping Leucothoe (*Leucothoe catesbaei*), shrub roses (*Rosa wichuriana*), Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) and Japanese Holly (*Ilex crenata*). Ground covers included Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*) and English Ivy (*Hedera helix*). Surrounding the four corners of the reflecting pool and outlining the perimeter of the plaza, plantings of Boxwood (*Buxus*

sempervirens) hedges underplanted with Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*) were specified. Each planting area under the four Elms (*Ulmus americana*) flanking the reflecting pool was specified to be covered with gravel, while the five panels immediately in front of the Buchanan Memorial were specified to be planted with English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) (see figure 45).

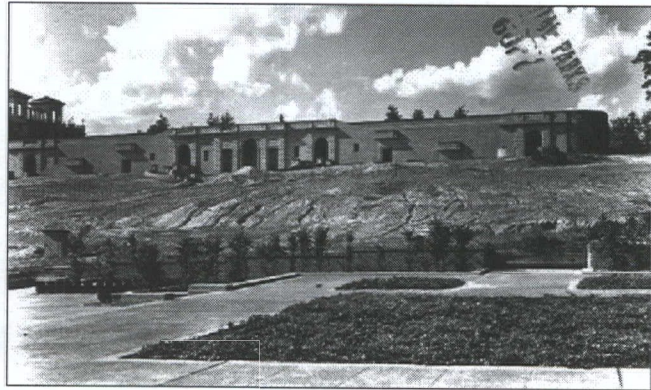


Figure 45: Lower plaza after planting showing the use of English Ivy in the panels in front of the Buchanan Memorial, the Hornbeam hedge and the planting of Boxwood as an edging. The Boxwood was later replaced with granite sets (RCP-CRF, October 31, 1929).

Plant materials, including Boxwood for the 16th Street entrance to the lower plaza, were purchased in 1928. The boxwoods were planted; the remaining plant materials were placed in nurseries for planting later.¹³ Although the area surrounding the reflecting pool was planted in 1929, by November of 1930 it was already showing evidence of lack of maintenance. In a letter to U.S. Grant III, Peaslee states that many of the Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) had died and a number had been planted with their roots exposed. He indicates that the four Elms (*Ulmus americana*) that had been planted in "the garden proper," should be replaced with larger, better-formed specimens.¹⁴

Also planted by 1929 were the various urns around the lower gardens, specifically those at the 16th Street entrance and around the perimeter of the exedra. Yucca (*Yucca species*) and English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) were used in the urns along W Street; Peaslee recommended a similar treatment for the urns around the exedra. He recommended using only ivy in the urns at the 16th Street entrance and the two urns along 16th Street below the as yet unconstructed 16th Street overlook.¹⁵

In 1929, excavation and construction for the great terrace began (see plan sheet 8 and figures 46 through 49), in tandem with the development of many design details for the lower garden of

13 Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital Parks, 1928.

14 The four elms presumably refer to the four elms surrounding the reflecting pool, since the area to the south flanking W Street has not yet been planted and it contains five elms. Horace Peaslee to U. S. Grant III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 7 November 1930.

15 Horace Peaslee to U. S. Grant III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 24 February 1930.



Figure 46: Prior to great wall construction with Joan of Arc set at the edge of the slope (RCP-CRF, October 31, 1929).

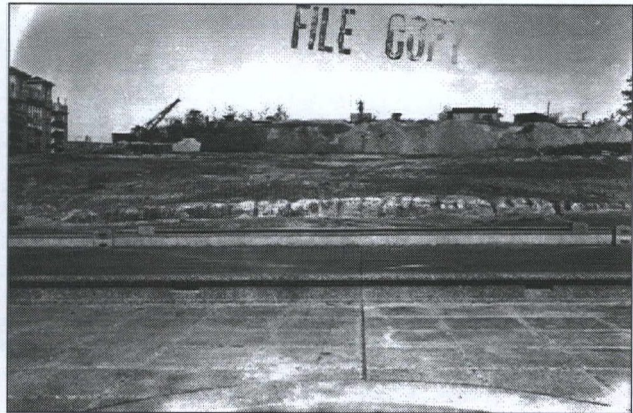


Figure 47: View north from the lower plaza before construction of the great wall and cascades (RCP-CRF, March 14, 1932).



Figure 48: Wall construction of 16th Street entrance showing formwork (RCP-CRF, December 20, 1929).

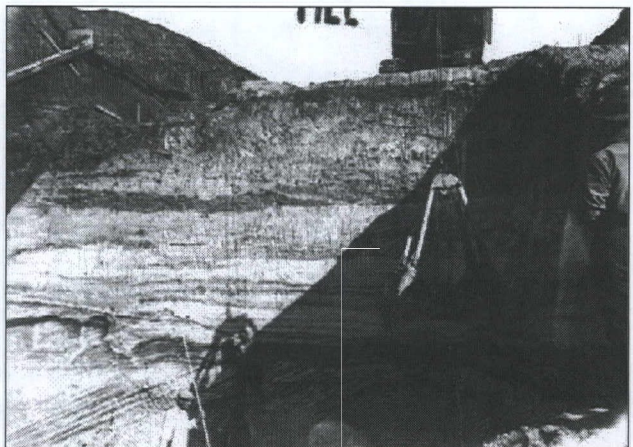


Figure 49: View of earth strata exposed during construction of great wall (RCP-CRF, November 8, 1929).

the park. At this point all of the storage spaces were eliminated from beneath the great terrace to allow more room for the tree roots above, and storage spaces were instead designed under the stairways.¹⁶ Peaslee traveled to France in 1929 to study water features in the gardens and parks of Paris and Vaux-le-Vicomte. His study of water features aided in the final preparation of plans for the cascades, fountains, and reflecting pools of Meridian Hill Park.¹⁷

Along with the design of water features in the park, Peaslee located and designed drinking fountains. In 1929 there were two drinking fountains located in the park, apparently interim, both on the upper level, one in front of the 15th Street Lodge and one at the top of the 16th Street entrance stairway.¹⁸ Consistent with his attention to design details in other areas of the park, in 1929 Peaslee began to design a drinking fountain for the park. This design would be used to re-

16 CFA Minutes, 28 May 1929.

17 Horace Peaslee to Dr. Charles Moore, Commission of Fine Arts, 29 July 1929.

18 Existing Conditions Survey, Meridian Hill Park, RG 79, 41-86 and 41-87, National Archives.

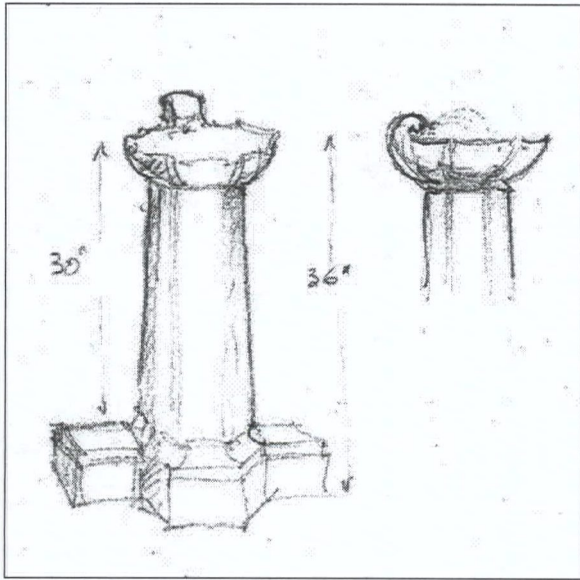


Figure 50: Peaslee's 1931 sketch of a drinking fountain for Meridian Hill Park (Peaslee to Grant, 9 January 1931, National Archives, RG 42).

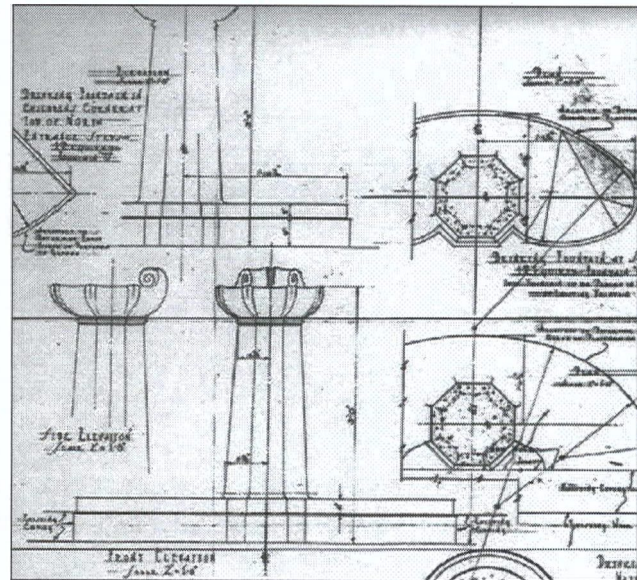


Figure 51: A section of Peaslee's construction details for the drinking fountains in the park (National Archives, RG 79, 41-112.)

place the two fountains in the upper park and also be installed in several locations in the lower park.¹⁹

His initial drinking fountain sketches in 1931 (see figure 50) and construction drawings (figure 51) show a shell-shaped basin with a simple fluted shaft, with a base projecting at the sides to form steps for smaller children. These were placed at the top of the main 16th Street entrance stairway, at the 15th Street Lodge, to either side of the cascades in front of the great wall and at the head of the stairs leading to both the 15th and W Street, and 16th Street and W Street corners.

Also in 1929, the Commission of Fine Arts considered a proposal made by the United States Geological Survey (USGS)²⁰ and the Carnegie Institution of Washington²¹ to leave a cross-section of the bluff on the 16th Street side of the park exposed for public viewing. Both USGS officials and Dr. John C. Merriam, President of the Carnegie Institute, claimed the strata making up the bluff at Meridian Hill were of unique origin and importance and that the geologic story it told would be of great interest to both scientists and the public. However, because the great terrace was already under construction at the time, the Commission decided that any treatment of the geologic strata would interfere with the features and plans for the park. Therefore, the scientists' request was denied.²²

19 Horace Peaslee to Major J. C. Mehaffey, National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 12 December 1929.

20 Julian D. Sears, Acting Director, U. S. Geological Survey, United States Department of the Interior, to U.S. Grant III, Director, Public Buildings and Public Parks, 4 November 1929.

21 President, Carnegie Institution to U.S. Grant, III, 5 November 1929.

Beginning in 1929, Peaslee began to recommend changes to the placement of the statuary in the park, and to the method for determining appropriate statuary. He recommended a “definite plan of development for the sculptural treatment of the entire park.”²³ He regarded Dante as “too large in its present location, as the Jeanne d’Arc statue is too small; and the Statue of Serenity needs a better setting.”²⁴ Peaslee went so far as to suggest changing the location of Joan of Arc:

“I spoke to the members of the Commission about the possibility of a change in the location of the Jeanne d’Arc statue. I felt that the statue was not placed to its own best advantage, especially with the established terrace treatment which will cut off a view from the south, and that it is out of scale with the terrace as a whole.”²⁵

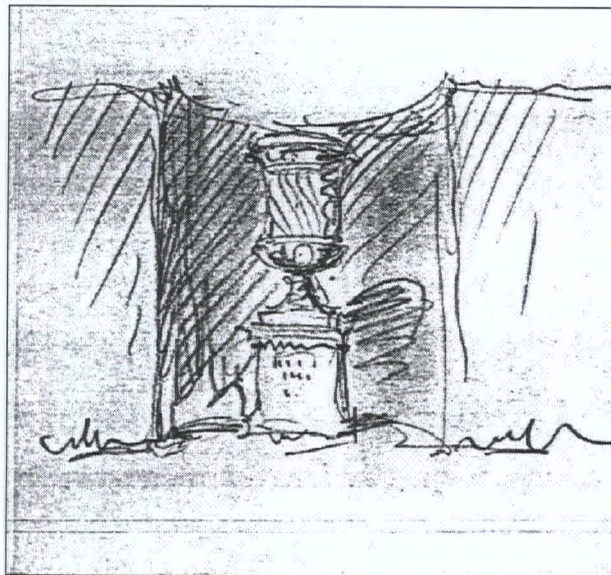


Figure 52: Peaslee's sketch of a proposed design for an urn to be placed in the hedge niches of the mall from a letter to Colonel U. S. Grant, III, January 22, 1930 (National Archives, RG 42, Entry 310).

Although he preferred the Euclid Street end of the park for a new location because of the proximity to the proposed French Embassy, the statue was never moved. The French Embassy did not locate to this area, and the Commission of Fine Arts felt that it would be too expensive to move the statue.²⁶

In order to provide a common theme for memorials in the park, Peaslee suggested that the niches in the mall hedges were the perfect location for additional memorials (see figure 52):

“As you know, there are eight niches in these hedges, which I have had in mind for the placement of memorials. It has seemed to me desirable that the character of these memorials should be determined. In Verona, at the Villa Giusti, there is a long avenue accented by various types of obelisks and urns; also in Padua, in the island center of the Hippodrome, are a number of decorative urns regularly placed on pedestals. In the main mall at Versailles the accents again are decorative urns. I am loath to see portrait busts or Serenities placed in these niches. It seems to me that a continuity of treatment is desirable. What I believe would be fitting would be decorative urns on pedestals, which perhaps might be given as memorials. This calls attention to the height and size

22 Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts to U.S. Grant, III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 5 November 1929.

23 CFA Minutes, 28 May 1929.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Horace Peaslee to H. P. Caemmerer, Commission of Fine Arts, 21 February 1930.

26 CFA Minutes, 2 February 1930.

of the urn and the relation in size of the hedge background. The hedges as they stand seem much too low.”²⁷

The other location in the park for which ornamental urns were recommended was the lower plaza where twelve antique oil jars were specified to be placed on pedestals around the reflecting pool. In 1930, Peaslee had identified a source for these oil jars (see figure 53), however, although the reflecting pool’s pedestals were constructed in order to accept urns, they were never put in place.

In addition to his concern about the placement of statuary in the upper park, Peaslee was dissatisfied with the planting treatment on either side of the mall at the main crosswalk joining the 15th Street and main 16th Street entrances. He was “disturbed not only by the treatment of the mall itself but by the idea of ultimately having two sorts of background to the long park entrance from 15th Street.”²⁸ He recommended extension of the hedge south along the walk at the eastern edge of the eastern oak grove (see figure 55). He also recommended enclosing small play spaces in this area,²⁹ which the Commission did not approve in the 1932 planting plan (see figure 56), but which was ultimately implemented in 1936.

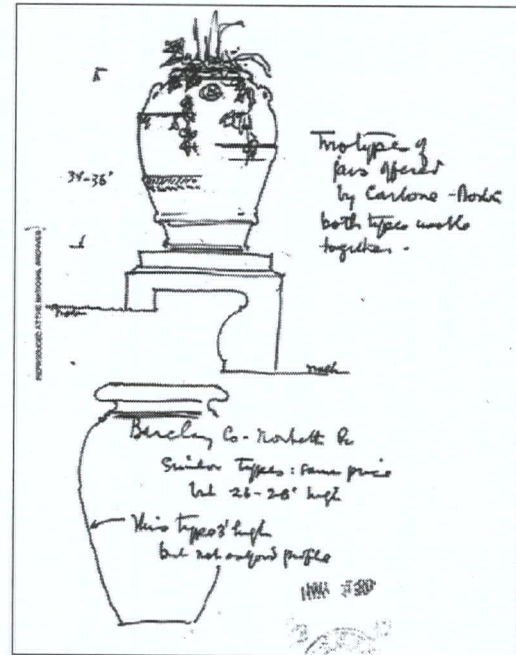


Figure 53: Peaslee's 1930 sketch of the antique urns recommended for placement around the reflecting pool (Horace Peaslee to Colonel U. S. Grant, III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 28 April, 1930).

A final design change made in 1930 was from a bandstand or “tempietto” to a platform as the concert feature.³⁰ As previously proposed, this temple of music was to have been a high, rounded bandstand located just north of the great terrace as a focal point for the upper park. Vitale, on the CFA from 1927 to 1932, supported Peaslee's change in design in a letter to the Commission: “I fully agreed with him that the bandstand pavilion had better be left out and a simple platform constructed.”³¹ Peaslee further elaborated his concept for the feature in 1931: “The structure which I am proposing is a simple platform, circular in form, enclosed by a coping of seat height. This makes the structure available for use as a park feature when not required for concerts, and does not cut off the view of the orchestra.”³² However, cost overruns for building the terrace left little money available for additional work, and moving the Joan of Arc statue and construction of the concert platform were deemed expendable and were never realized.³³

27 Horace Peaslee to U. S. Grant, III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 22 January 1930.

28 *Ibid.*

29 Horace Peaslee to U. S. Grant, III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 13 January 1931.

30 CFA Minutes, 7 November 1930.

31 Ferruccio Vitale to Mr. Charles Moore, Commission of Fine Arts, 11 November 1930.

32 Horace Peaslee to U. S. Grant, III, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 2 January 1931.

33 C.A. Peters, Jr., Senior Civil Engineer to Chief, Engineering Division, 11 November 1936.

The Commission of Fine Arts considered the idea of an Armillary Sphere as early as January 6, 1928, when a photograph of a model of the sphere was submitted to them for comment.³⁴ By September 10, 1929, the Commission voted to accept a sphere designed by Mr. Paul C. Jennewein³⁵ (see figure 54), having received a \$15,000 donation from Washington philanthropist and artist Bertha Noyes for its purchase.³⁶ Bertha Noyes, who commissioned it in memory of her sister Edith Noyes, was a well-known figure in the Washington art world. She studied at the Corcoran School of Art, held many solo shows there, and was a founder of the Washington Arts Club. A Joint Resolution was passed on April 19, 1932 by Congress to accept the Armillary Sphere, and it was completed and installed in the park in that year, dedicated in 1934, and cost a total of \$32,000.³⁷

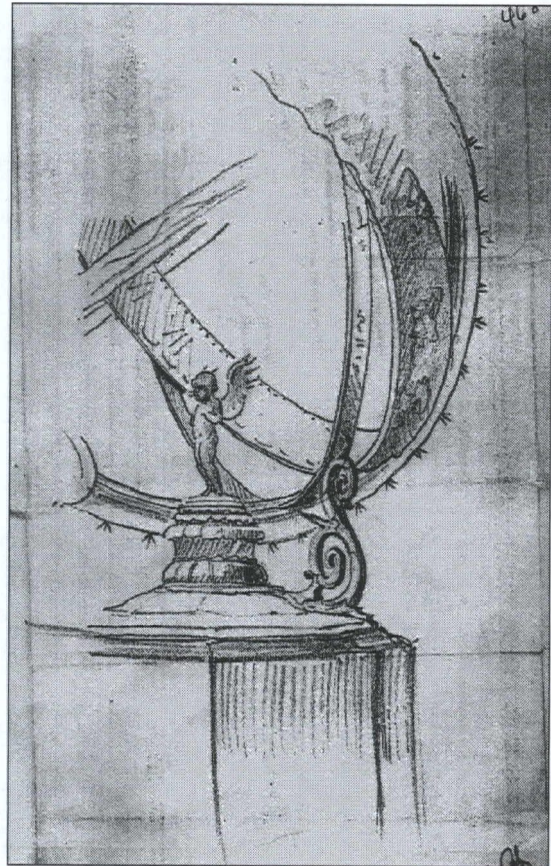


Figure 54: Armillary Sphere, in place by 1934 (RCP-CRF, no date).

Located in the exedra south of the reflecting pool, the Armillary Sphere is the terminal focal point of the long axis through the cascades. The sphere is an interpretation of an ancient astronomical instrument first used in China approximately 200 B.C.E. Similar spheres were frequently used in Europe during the seventeenth century to illustrate the Ptolemaic theory of an earth-centered universe. The metal rings of the sphere represent the great circles of the heavens arranged into degrees for angular measurement.³⁸

Cast in bronze, the Armillary Sphere was designed to be 6 feet 6 inches high, 5 feet 8 inches in diameter, and rested on a pedestal of green Conway granite 3 feet 4 inches high designed by Peaslee. The sphere contained the signs of the zodiac in relief on the outside of the circle, along with the hours of the day marked in Roman numerals. A bronze arrow formed the axis of the sphere, and in the center was a small winged figure of a child greeting the sun. At the base on

34 CFA Minutes, 6 January 1928.

35 Jennewein, whose other work included the eagles on Washington Memorial Bridge, also fabricated the approved Armillary Sphere.

36 CFA Minutes, 10 September, 1929; 1 July 1930; 16 September 1930; 16 October 1930; 12 February 1931; 19 March 1931; 15 December 1933.

37 Frank T. Gartside, Assistant Superintendent, National Capital Parks to Mr. David P. Braun, no date (RCP-CRF).

38 "Engraving Completes Memorial to Edith Noyes in Meridian Park," *The Washington Star*, no date (National Archives, RG 66, Entry 17, Box 104).

the south side of the pedestal was a bronze dial correction table and on the north side, an inscription read, "Given to the Federal City, MCMXXXVI for Edith Noyes."³⁹

In 1935, shortly after setting the Armillary Sphere, Horace Peaslee expressed his concern about the potential for vandalism of the base of sphere.⁴⁰ By 1944, a Hawthorn (*Craetegus species*) hedge surrounded the base of the Sphere. The Sphere was vandalized in the 1960's and later disappeared after it had been removed from the park for repair.

The Buchanan Memorial was dedicated on June 26, 1930 in the lower garden.⁴¹ The monument was built with a bequest from Harriet Lane Johnston, President Buchanan's niece. Because Buchanan had never married, Ms. Lane had acted as hostess for her uncle throughout his years in the White House, 1857-1861. When she died, a bequest to fund a monument to her uncle was declared and managed by the trustees of her estate. However, Congress was slow to act on a site for the memorial, and did not take steps to sign an act making a provision for the monument until a few weeks before a fifteen-year time limit on the bequest was to expire in 1918.⁴²

Originally, Burnap's 1914 plan placed the Buchanan Memorial on the principal axis of the park, south of the reflecting pool (see figure 57). However, in 1915 the Commission of Fine Arts had recommended that the memorial be placed on the east side of the reflecting pool where it now stands (see figure 58), changing the focus of the lower plaza, and creating a cross axis. The bronze seated figure of Buchanan measured 8 feet in height, and was placed in front of a white marble slab with flanking walls at the ends of which were two granite allegorical figures, Law and Diplomacy, each of which measured 7 feet in height and about 4 feet in width. The memorial was sculpted by Hans Schuler, and the architect for installation was William Gordon Beecher.

An interesting footnote in 1930 was an unsuccessful attempt to change the name of the park to "Henderson Park." Although opposed by U. S. Grant III, the name change was proposed in H. R. 13292 in July of 1930. Grant opposed the resolution on the basis that her "interest in the project has been purely selfish," pointing out that "Mrs. Henderson did not donate any of the land or contribute in any way to the cost of this most expensive project. Her only connection with it has been in urging the project on Congress and assisting in the same way in getting appropriations for its execution. Her interest in it has naturally been largely in its beneficial effect on the value of her Sixteenth Street property."⁴³

Questions and tensions about the use of the park are illustrated in 1930. Conceived from the beginning as a formal public park of city-wide significance,⁴⁴ the park has also always served its

39 *Ibid.*

40 Horace Peaslee to Mr. C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, 20 October 1935.

41 Program of Exercises Attending the Unveiling of the Monument to the Memory of James Buchanan, 26 June 1930.

42 William A. Millen, "Monument to America's First Bachelor President," *The Sunday Star*, 13 July 1930.

43 U. S. Grant, III, to Hon. William J. Harris, United States Senate, June 26, 1930.

44 The CFA minutes of 4 April 1913 had established that the park should be designed for use as "a general congregation point, attracting large numbers of visitors from all over the city..." This vision of the park had

immediate neighborhood. Horace Peaslee, architect of the park, seriously considered ways in 1930 to make winter “coasting” possible in the park.⁴⁵ However, later a letter to a neighborhood resident from U. S. Grant, III, on a ball playing complaint clearly states, “Ball playing is not permitted in Meridian Hill Park nor in any of the other public parks not provided with a regulation diamond.”⁴⁶

Beginning in 1930, much of the attention in the park focused on the construction of the cascades, which took until 1932 to complete (see plan sheets 10 and 11). In 1930 designs for comfort stations and storage rooms under the great terrace stairs were also begun. As with all structural elements in the park, consideration was given to the design of the cascades and how they fit in with the other elements of the park. The Commission of Fine Arts and Peaslee “...considered whether the cascade should be maintained at the original width or be reduced to relate better to the width of the exedra... which faced it across the reflecting pool to the south.” They also “considered whether the level of the lower plaza related properly in elevation to the source of the cascades and to the fountains of the great wall, providing just the right angle to achieve the optimum view of each from the other.”⁴⁷ “Appropriate lighting for the cascade and the pools below it was also given careful consideration.”⁴⁸ The use of strong light emanating from indirect

Note, the last dated, signed and approved drawings do not show the path that runs from the discontinuous mall crosswalk, just north of the great terrace, around the end of the great terrace to join the service drive. However, the path as constructed does appear on a drawing identical to figures 55, 56, and 64 except that it appears to have been modified to include the path and eliminate the niches at the eastern ends of the two minor mall cross axes. Although this modification is not dated, the path appears to be original to the park from physical evidence and there is no evidence that the hedge-defined niches were executed.

Figure 55: (following) 1932 planting plan showing approved, but not implemented, extension of the hedge south along the walk at the eastern edge of the eastern oak grove and soil planting mixtures. Note the walk from the oak grove area around the eastern end of the great terrace to the base of the great terrace is not yet shown. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-13).

Figure 56: (following) 1930 planting plan showing recommended extension of the hedge south along the walk at the eastern edge of the eastern oak grove and the enclosed play areas at the main mall crosswalk at the top of the plan. It is not known when the enclosed play areas were approved, although they were implemented in 1936, appearing in photographs that year. Although the hedge extension was approved, there is no indication that it was ever planted. (National Archives, RG 79, 41.2-6).

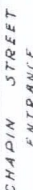
continued as demonstrated by a letter from Charles Platt, New York architect and member of the CFA to Charles Moore on December 12, 1930, Platt says, “I have always thought that the Meridian Hill Park, when completed, would be one of the features in Washington which [sic] would be one of the features in Washington which [sic] would not only give pleasure to the residents of the City, but would be a landmark...of landscape work of great interest to the profession.

45 Horace Peaslee, to U.S. Grant, III, February 1, 1930. It must be noted, however, that Peaslee considered a number of somewhat bizarre features for the park, such as models of Niagara Falls and Old Faithful, so it is necessary to keep his coasting ideas in context.

46 U. S. Grant, III, to Miss Alice Hutchins Drake, June 10, 1932.

47 HABS, p. 24.

48 *Ibid.*, p.24.



PLANTING LIST FOR SECTION 3			
PART 3A			
	SCIENTIFIC NAME	QUNT.	SIZE B'D SPR
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Calocarpus longipall</i>	7	2'-6"
	<i>Quercus xalapensis</i>	7	2'-6"
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	3	2'-0"
	<i>Pinus rigida</i>	6	2'-0"
	<i>Pinus oaxacana</i>	21	2'-0"
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	<i>Argemone procumbens</i>	24	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	21	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	21	2'-0"
VINES	<i>Celastrus scandens</i>	21	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	21	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	21	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	21	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	21	2'-0"
PART 3B			
HEDGE	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Argemone procumbens</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
VINES	<i>Celastrus scandens</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
PART 3C			
HEDGE	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Argemone procumbens</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	<i>Argemone procumbens</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Juniperus rigida</i>	25	2'-0"
VINES	<i>Celastrus scandens</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
	<i>Passiflora ligularis</i>	25	2'-0"
FOR GENERAL USE AS GROUND COVER.			

DESIGNED BY
VITALE, BRINCKERHOFF AND GEIFFERT
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
NEW YORK CITY FEBRUARY 5, 1919.

REVISED IN PART BY
IRVING W. PAYNE, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
COL. C. O. SHERRILL AND COL. U. S. GRANT
DIRECTORS SUCCESSIVELY IN CHARGE
OFFICE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC PARKS
OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1930.

SOIL FORMULAS

<u>ACID SOIL BED</u>	<u>NON-ACID SOIL BED</u>
12" DEEP	13" DEEP
1 part sandy soil	1 part clay
1 part woods earth	1 part sandy soil
1 part leaf mold or hardwood leaves	1 part leaf mold

NON-ACID SOIL BED
13" deep

1 part clay
1 part sandy soil
1 part leaf mold

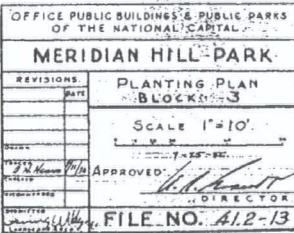
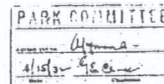


Figure 55

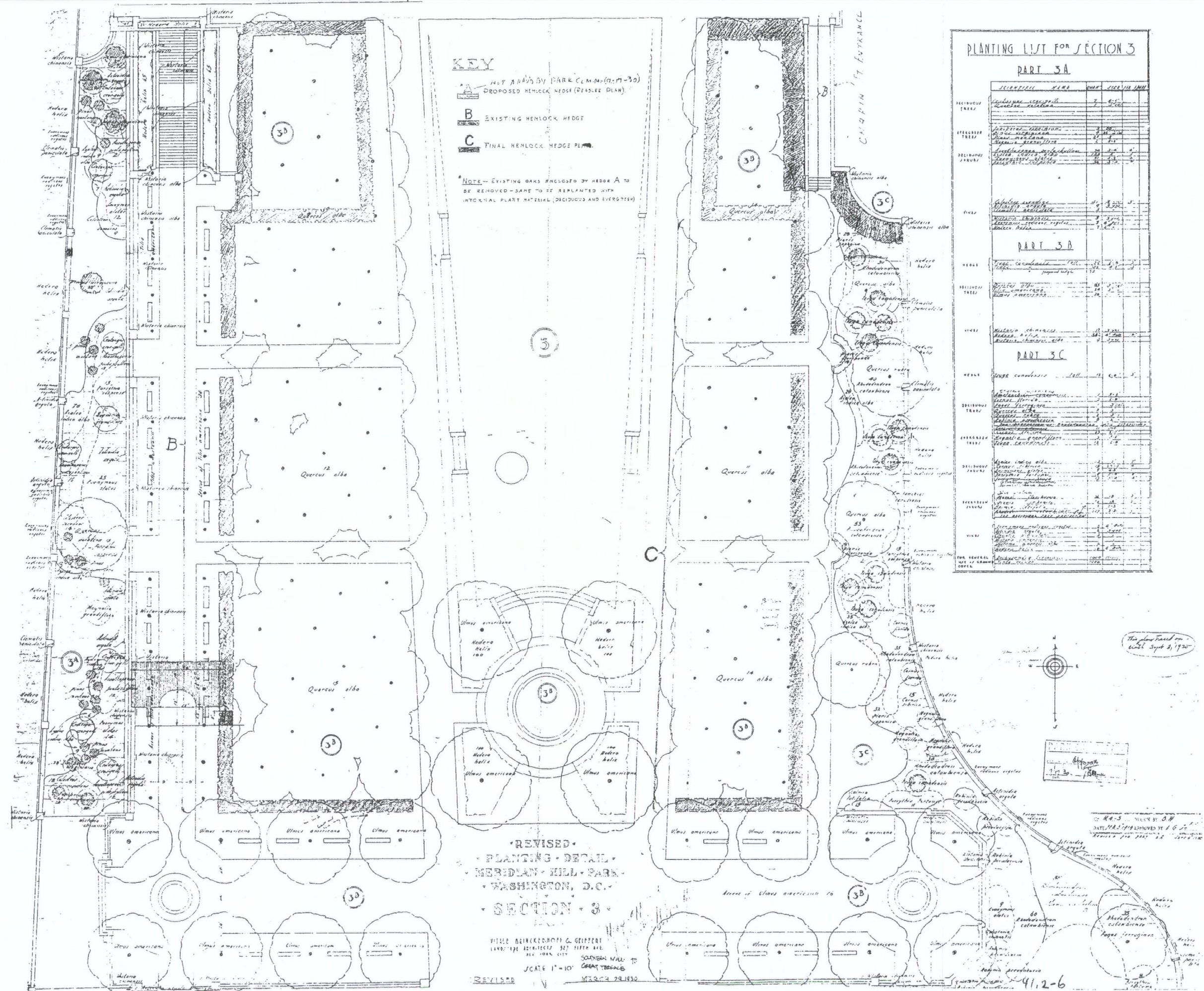


Figure 56

EUCLID STREET

FIFTEENTH STREET

SIXTEENTH STREET

CHAPIN STREET

BELMONT ST

CRESCENT PLACE

BELMONT ST

W STREET

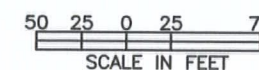
CONTRACT FOR THE
CASCADES WAS SENT
TO BID IN 1931.
CONSTRUCTION BEGAN
IN 1932 AND WAS
COMPLETED IN 1933.

THE
ARMILLARY
SPHERE WAS
INSTALLED
IN 1932.

SUBGRADING ON
THE HILLSIDE WAS
COMPLETED JULY
17, 1933.

KEY

- SOLID LINES DENOTE CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN 1931-1933
- SCREENED LINES DENOTE CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED PRIOR TO 1931



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

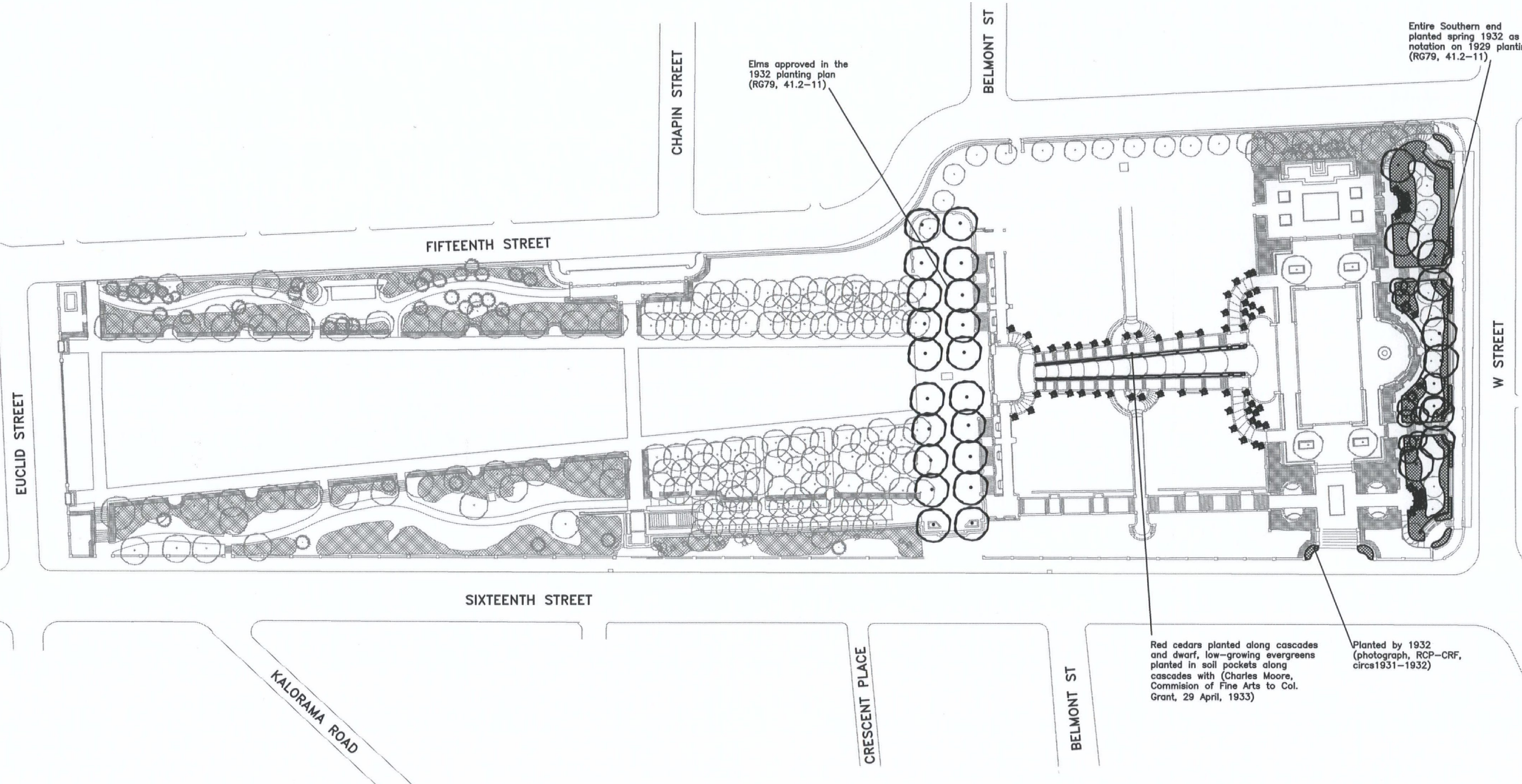
CONSTRUCTION

1931-1933

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

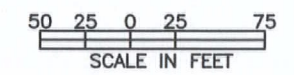
DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 10



- KEY
- | | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| ○ DECIDUOUS TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD | □ GRASS | □ BLACK FOR NEW GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES FOR THE TIME PERIOD |
| ● EVERGREEN TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD | □ GROUND COVER | □ SCREENED SYMBOL FOR GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES PREDATING THE TIME PERIOD |
| ○ DECIDUOUS TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD | ■ SHRUB MASS | |
| ● EVERGREEN TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD | ■ HEDGE | |

NOTE:
SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS
AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

PLANTING 1931-1933

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 11

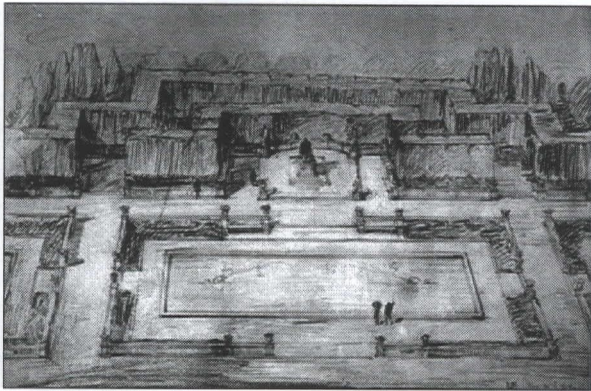


Figure 57: An early design concept for the Buchanan Memorial in the exedra (National Archives, RG 66-DC, Box 2 of 2, Parks folder, no date).

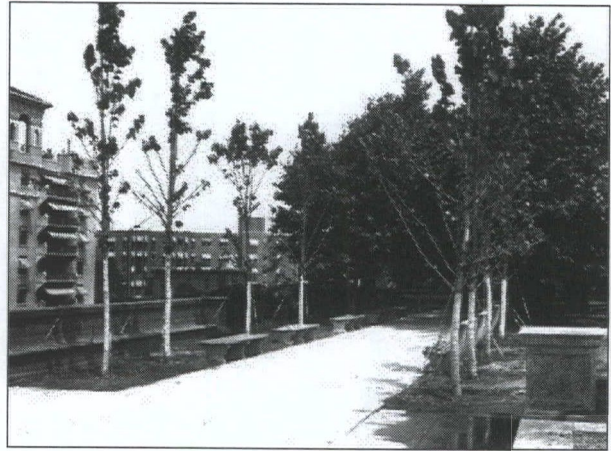


Figure 58: View, completion of Linden allee in 1934 with the planting of the last eight trees, paving and benches. The benches, present in 1934, are gone in 1996, as a result of the tie-back project. (RCP-CRF, 1934).



Figure 59: View, across 16th Street of lower gardens under construction (RCP-CRF, March 24, 1932).

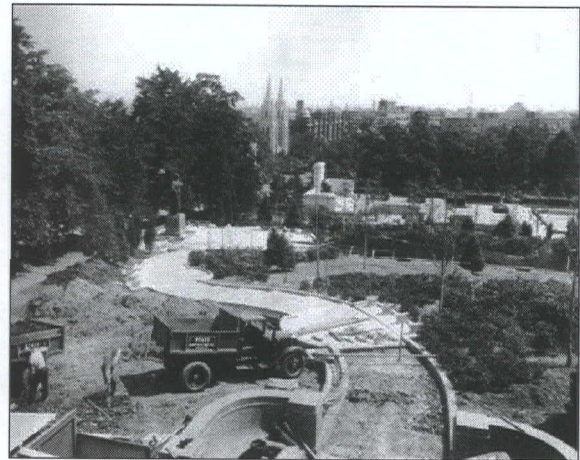


Figure 60: View, south along east ascent under construction (RCP-CRF, March 14, 1932).

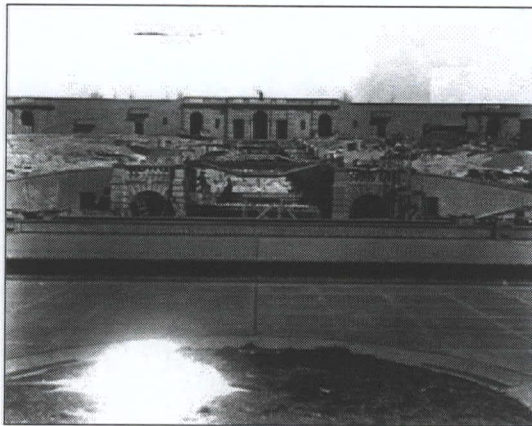


Figure 61: View, north from lower plaza of the cascades under construction (RCP-CRF, 24 March 1932).

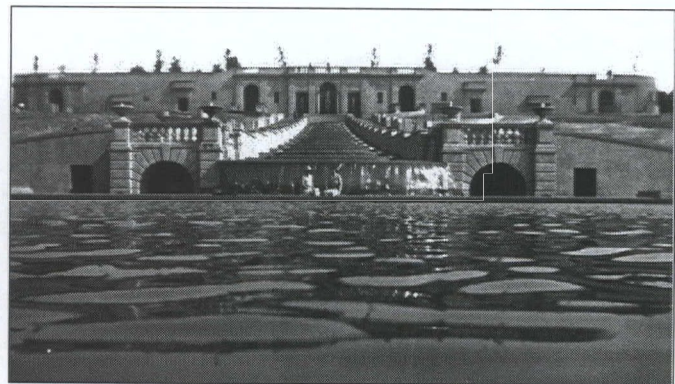


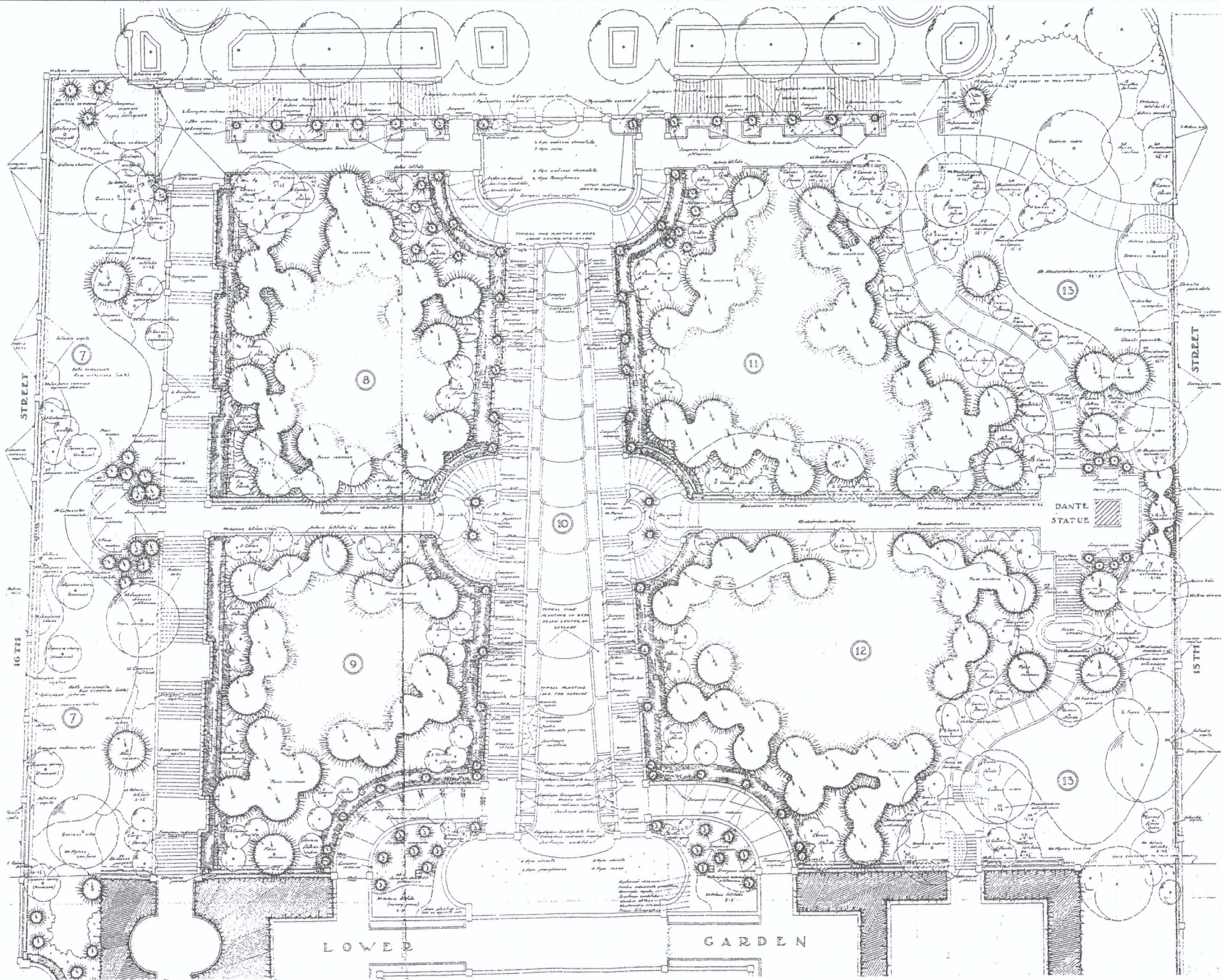
Figure 62: View, north from lower plaza, of completed cascades showing flowing water but no plantings, (RCP-CRF, c. 1933).

SECTION 11				
CLASSIFICATION	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SIZE	SPACING	ORIENTAL COPY
HEDGE	Box hedges	12" x 6" x 6"		
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	5' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Cornus florida</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Pinus resinosa</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Arctostaphylos</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
VINES	<i>Ampelopsis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Clematis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Passiflora</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Passiflora</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
GRASS	<i>Ophiopogon</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
SECTION 12				
HEDGE	Box hedges	12" x 6" x 6"		
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	5' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Cornus florida</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	<i>Arctostaphylos</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
GRASS	<i>Ophiopogon</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
SECTION 13				
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	5' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Cornus florida</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	<i>Arctostaphylos</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Salix</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
VINES	<i>Ampelopsis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
	<i>Clematis</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		
GRASS	<i>Ophiopogon</i>	4' x 6" x 6"		

MERIDIAN HILL PARK HILLSIDE GARDEN
 DESIGNED BY
 VITALE, BRINKERHOFF AND GEIFERT -
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 NEW YORK CITY OCTOBER 4, 1920
 HORACE W. PEASLEE -
 ARCHITECT
 WASHINGTON, D.C.
 REVISED IN PART BY
 IRVING W. PAYNE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
 UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
 COL. U.S. GRANT, III
 DIRECTOR -
 OFFICE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC PARKS
 OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL
 APRIL 25, 1932.

Figure 63: (to left and following) Irving Payne's 1932 revision of Vitale's 1919 planting plan for the hillside garden. In this plan, the loosely massed Virginia pines of the 1919 plan have been changed to red pines and the trees in the center of the quadrants have been removed, leaving open grassed areas. Also, the red cedars previously shown within the hedges along the cascades have been moved inward along the edges of the cascades. In the years since Vitale's original planting plans, the design of the structural elements of the hillside gardens has been refined. The Dante plaza has changed, the east ascent has become less naturalistic with the addition of continuous curbs and developed intermediate landings, the cross axis from Dante to the 16th Street overlook, including the overlook itself, has been refined, and the walk at the base of the great terrace wall has been developed. In general, in both plantings and structure, continued detail development is clearly visible. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-15).

Figure 64: (following) In the 1935 approved plan for the hillside gardens, prepared by Irving Payne three years after Vitale left the CFA, the massed pines have been eliminated and replaced by more widely spaced sycamores. Specimen hemlocks have been added in strategic locations at the edges of the quadrants, which are now carpeted with a ground cover of English ivy rather than grass. The understory flowering tree massings have remained essentially the same, but the flowering shrubs remain only along the east ascent. The holly hedges along the cascades, present since 1919, have been moved away from the cascades to leave room for a strip of euonymus punctuated by red cedars at the edges of the cascades. Hemlocks were also used instead of red pines and some massings of red cedars in the border areas along 15th and 16th Streets. The shrub planting areas were extended in the border areas to eliminate completely all grass and a greater diversity of shrub and herbaceous materials has been added. The structural elements of the hillside garden portion of the park are largely unchanged from the 1932 plan, unlike the dramatic revisions in the plantings. In the 1935 plans, steps have been eliminated from what is now the service drive and the path to the mall around the eastern end of the great terrace appears. An additional refinement at the Dante plaza completes the extent of the final structural revisions. (National Archives RG 79, 41.2-19).



SECTION 7					
CLASSIFICATION	SCIENTIFIC NAME	QUANTITY	SIZE	SPACING	EST. TOTAL COST
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	3	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	3	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Quercus alba</i>	2	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	<i>Hamamelis virginica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Malus domestica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Euonymus alatus</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Hamamelis virginica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Malus domestica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
VINES	<i>Ampelopsis tricuspidata</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
GRASS	<i>St. Augustine</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Centipede</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
SECTION 8					
HEDGE	<i>Boxwood</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Hamamelis virginica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Malus domestica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
VINES	<i>Ampelopsis tricuspidata</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
GRASS	<i>St. Augustine</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Centipede</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
SECTION 9					
HEDGE	<i>Boxwood</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Hamamelis virginica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Malus domestica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
VINES	<i>Ampelopsis tricuspidata</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
GRASS	<i>St. Augustine</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Centipede</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
SECTION 10					
HEDGE	<i>Boxwood</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
DECIDUOUS TREES	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN TREES	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	<i>Hamamelis virginica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Malus domestica</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
VINES	<i>Ampelopsis tricuspidata</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
GRASS	<i>St. Augustine</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	
	<i>Centipede</i>	1	4'-6"	8'	

NOTE: * DENOTES COLLECTED PLANTS
ALL OTHER PLANTS TO BE PURCHASED GROWN



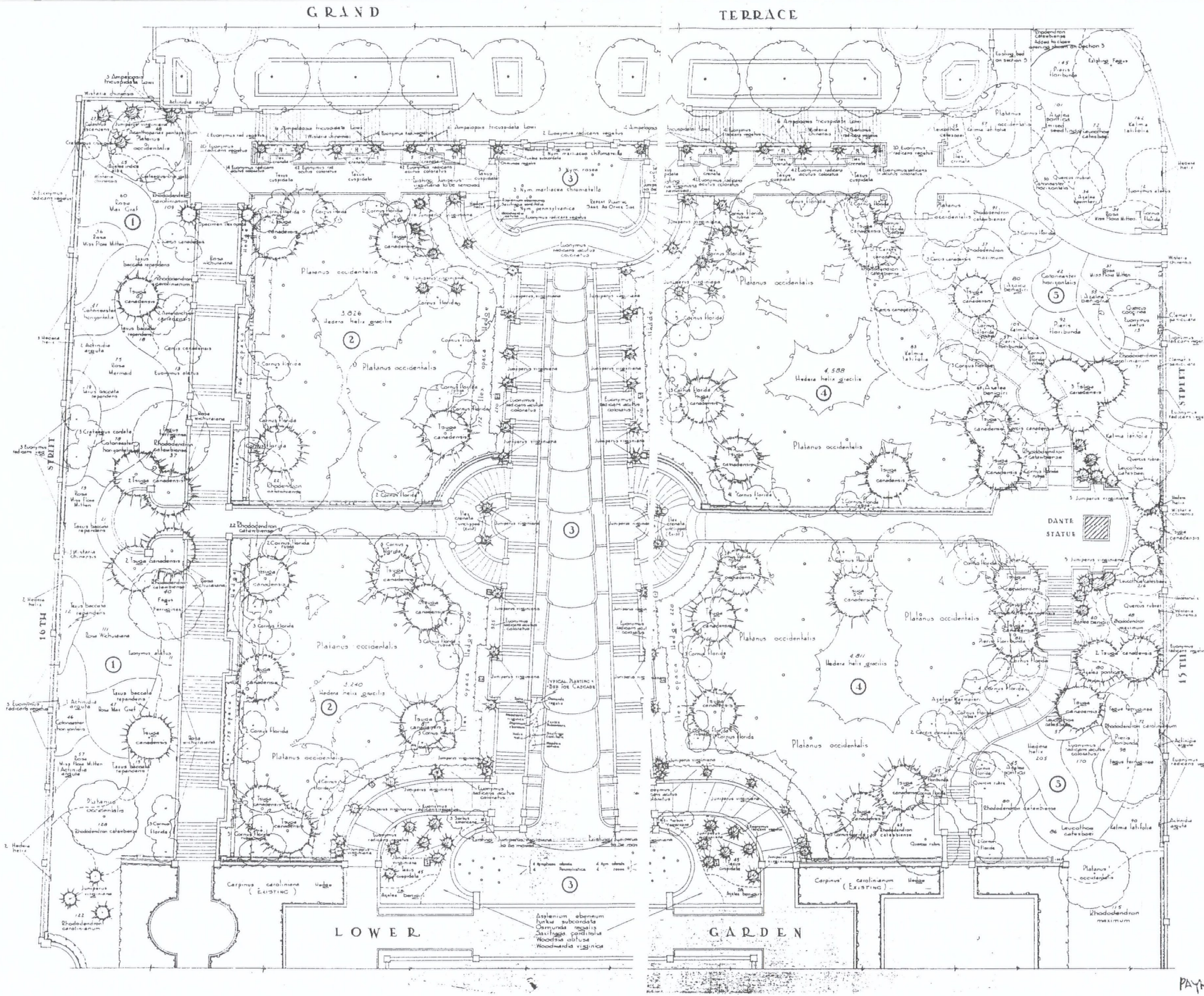
LEGEND
EXISTING TREES SHOWN THUS: 
PROPOSED TREES SHOWN THUS: 

Figure 63



LEGEND
 Existing Tree to be retained
 Existing Tree to be removed
 Future location of tree to be removed
 Proposed Tree

PLANTING LIST

CLASSIFICATION	SCIENTIFIC NAME	SIZE	FAIR AMOUNT	QUANTITIES
				1 2 3 4 5
Deciduous Trees	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Amelanchier canadensis	6-8'	2	1
	Crataegus cordata	6-8'	2	1
	Quercus rubra	6-8'	2	1
	Platanus occidentalis	6-8'	2	1
	Quercus macrocarpa	6-8'	2	1
	Prunella americana	6-8'	2	1
	Prunella virginiana	6-8'	2	1
	Prunella pennsylvanica	6-8'	2	1
	Prunella virginiana	6-8'	2	1
Evergreen Trees	Juniperus virginiana	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus horizontalis	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus communis	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus procumbens	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus horizontalis	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus communis	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus procumbens	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus horizontalis	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus communis	6-8'	2	1
	Juniperus procumbens	6-8'	2	1
Shrubs	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
	Asarum canadense	6-8'	2	1
Vines	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
	Ampelopsis tricuspidata	6-8'	2	1
Perennials	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
	Asplenium adnigrum	6-8'	2	1
NOT IN THIS CONTRACT				
Water Plants	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1
	Najas americana	6-8'	2	1

FROM ORIGINAL PLAN
 OF
 VITALE, BRINKERHOFF & GEIFFERT
 CONSULTING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 NEW YORK CITY

NOT IN THIS CONTRACT

WATER PLANTS

PAINE 1935

Figure 64

sources was intended to be a successful and innovative element of the park design, however it was only partially implemented.⁴⁹ Only the low recessed wall-mounted lamps, used to illuminate walkways, were constructed.

One 1930 modification to the cascades design involved changing the lip of each basin so that water flowed evenly over it, rather than through three spouts.⁵⁰ This modification, suggested by Mr. Vitale, simplified the cascades design, resulting in sheets rather than spouts of water.

During 1930, plans for the comfort stations and storage rooms under the terrace were also begun.⁵¹ In 1931, as construction on the cascades was taking place, the lower gardens of the park were nearly completed. By July 1931, the west ascent leading from the hillside gardens to the top of the terrace, as well as the comfort stations and storage rooms were completed.⁵²

By 1932, most of the structural work in the park was complete, and the cascades had flowing water. The Armillary Sphere was also complete and installed in 1932.

Lighting concepts for the park were discussed and developed during 1932. Along with lighting of the cascades, night lighting of the entire park was considered, and met with some opposition.⁵³ During this time, Peaslee designed the lantern for the main 16th Street entrance, and owl fixtures for the terrace vestibules (see figure 65).⁵⁴ These owl fixtures were in place in the vestibules as late as 1966, although in battered condition.⁵⁵

In 1933, jurisdiction over Meridian Hill Park was transferred from the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds to the National Park Service. However, no appropriations were made during 1933, 1934, and 1935. An additional allotment of \$145,000 was provided by the Public Works Administration in 1936 to make possible the completion of the park.⁵⁶

From 1930 to 1935, there were a number of revisions to Vitale's 1920 planting plans for the hillside gardens. The final, executed plans were approved by the Commission of Fine Arts on September 13, 1935 (see figures 63 and 64). During the years after preparation of his first planting plan for the park in 1919-1920 and the years he was on the CFA from 1927-1932, Vitale was actively involved in the evolution of the park's planting plan. He made suggestions, concurred

49 *Ibid.*

50 The upper basin at the center great wall niche fountain has the spout arrangement.

51 Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 1930.

52 Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 1931.

53 Gilmore D. Clarke to Mr. Charles Moore, Commission of Fine Arts, 28 September, 1932 (National Archives, RG 42, Entry 310).

54 Horace Peaslee to U. S. Grant III, Director of Public Buildings and Parks, 28 September, 1932 (National Archives, RG 42, Entry 310).

55 Kenneth W. Cobb, Consulting Engineers, and Youssef & Associates, Consultants for Plumbing Systems, *Report of Survey and Recommendations for Rehabilitation of Electric and Plumbing Systems for Meridian Hill Park*, (Washington Planning and Service Center, National Park Service, photocopy), 20 September 1966, p. 43.

56 HABS, p. 24.

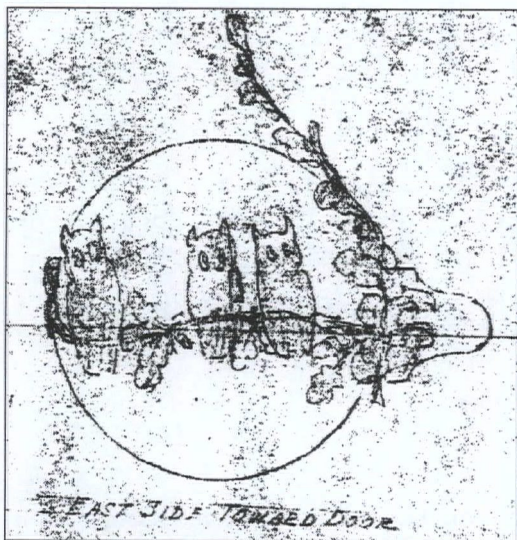


Figure 65: Owl lantern designed for the terrace vestibules, October 28, 1935 (National Archives, RG 79, 41.6-11).

with proposals from Peaslee, Irving Payne, and other commissioners, and was generally a continuing force in the development of plans for the park. The final approved 1935 plans for the park represented a major departure from Vitale's hillside gardens in particular. In the final plans for the four quadrants of the hillside gardens, the evergreen trees originally specified in the 1920 plan became a primarily deciduous planting of Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) with edge massings of Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) and Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*). The lawn areas under the tree canopy specified in the 1920 plan and retained in the 1932 revision changed to become mass plantings of English Ivy (*Hedera helix gracilis*). Shrub massings along the walkways were modified in outline in all three iterations of the plan, but remained in concept. The clipped American Holly hedge (*Ilex opaca*), which the 1920 and 1932 plans showed on either side of the cascades, was also modified. In the final 1935 plan,

the hedge was pulled back from the edge of the cascades, leaving the Eastern Red Cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*) as individual elements in a bed of Wintercreeper (*Euonymus radicans acutus coloratus*), with a backdrop of the clipped Holly hedge.

The Junipers were planted by early 1933, along with "dwarf, low growing evergreens ... in the small soil pockets along the edge of the water terraces."⁵⁷ In addition, "cat-tails...two varieties of siberian iris, a white and a blue,... *Clematis recta*...German iris, Perfection - light blue, *Hemerocallis flava* and *martensia*" were planted to fill out the pockets.⁵⁸

A planting plan dated October 16, 1935, (see figure 67) showed final planting changes and additions to be made before the park was officially opened. Modifications to the mall included the planting of four Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*) on the north side of the walks connecting the northern entrances of the park between 15th and 16th Streets, flanking the termini of the north/south walks; and replacement and filling in of the niches in the existing formally clipped Hemlock hedges (*Tsuga canadensis*) along the mall. On the south side of the cross axis between the main 16th Street entrance and the 15th Street entrance, Hemlock hedges (*Tsuga canadensis*) were added to define two play areas on either side of the mall.

Along 16th Street, the plan recommended augmenting the existing planting with a variety of shrubs and flowering and evergreen vines. Included in the recommended plantings are Trumpet Vine (*Bignonia radicans* 'Mme. Galen'), Chinese Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Wintercreeper (*Euonymus radicans coloratus*), Winter Flowering Jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*), Box Thorn (*Lycium chinense*), and Pyracantha (*Pyracantha coccinea*).

⁵⁷ Charles Moore to Grant, 29 April 1933.

⁵⁸ A. H. Hanson, Landscape Architect to Chief, Park Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 3 May 1933.

Revisions to the planting plan in the lower plaza focused on the eight planting wells located in the paved plaza area (see figures 66 and 67). Previous versions of the planting plan had shown the four tree wells around the reflecting pool to be planted with American Elms (*Ulmus americana*) with a ground cover of gravel, and the four planting areas in front of the Buchanan Memorial to be filled with English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) (see figure 45). The revised plan showed all eight planting wells with one Sycamore (*Platanus orientalis*) each, surrounded by 80 European Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) of 6 to 7 feet in height. This would dramatically change the quality of the space. In the original planting concept the reflecting pool “room” was defined by walls formed of tall, clipped hedges of American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) with four canopied American Elms (*Ulmus americana*) around the pool, and a ground plane plaza in front of the Buchanan Memorial. The planting of Sycamores (*Platanus orientalis*) surrounded by 6 to 7 foot tall Hornbeam hedges (*Carpinus betulus*) in all eight tree wells added “roofed pillars” that heavily framed the room in front of Buchanan. These additional 1936 plants essentially completed the park plantings (see plan sheets 12 and 13).

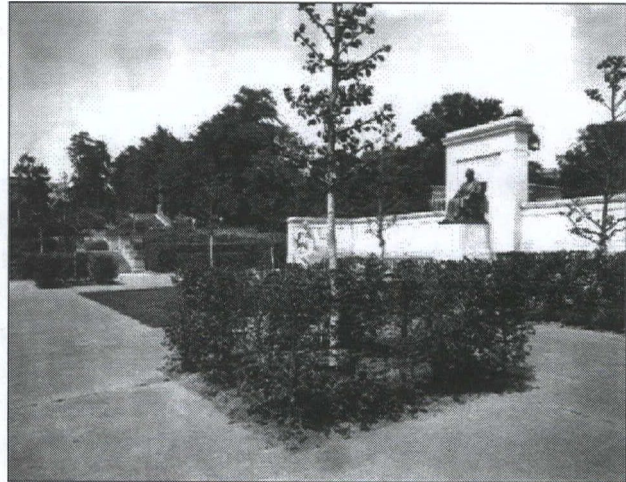


Figure 66: Photograph of the tree plantings in the lower plaza in front of the Buchanan Memorial (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).

On May 6, 1935, the Assistant Superintendent of the National Capital Parks announced that Meridian Hill Park would be completed at a total construction cost of \$1,156,126. This included \$1,011,126 in government appropriations from 1912 through 1935, and the \$145,000 allocated by the Public Works Administration in 1936. Together with the \$490,000 appropriated in 1912 to purchase the land, the total cost of Meridian Hill Park between 1912 and 1936 was \$1,646,126.⁵⁹ This figure was later corrected to \$1,536,000.⁶⁰

The lodge, built as a comfort station/park shelter in 1923-24, was modified in 1936 to eliminate the center park police office leaving an open-air timber-roofed seating area between the restrooms.

In 1936, Peaslee wrote a memo to Mr. Malcolm Kirkpatrick of the National Park Service explaining the need for improved planting in the park. Peaslee stated that he considered the original planting plan to be inadequately implemented, and that the plantings did not relate to the architecture of the park. He wrote, “I feel disturbed about the lack of close relationship of the main lines of design as expressed in the structure and the planting.”⁶¹ In the memo Peaslee explained that the close relationship he sought between architectural elements and plantings was characteristic of the sixteenth-century villas he had admired in Italy. However, even though the

59 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

60 HABS, p. 35.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

planting program was not implemented exactly as planned and Peaslee's expert eye had no trouble finding fault, the park was considered a great achievement and was officially opened on September 26, 1936.⁶²

Although officially opened, a planting plan for the 16th Street niche, prepared in October 1936, indicates that some planting was installed later in newly completed areas, like the niche, which was under construction as late as June of that year. Considering Peaslee's penchant for refinement, some additional plantings may have been added to newly completed areas and replacements installed for previously planted materials that died. Also, a drawing dated 1 October 1936 (RG 79, 41.2-22) shows basketweave brick paving at the raised planting areas on the great terrace with ground cover under the trees in those areas and creosote treated boards between the ground cover and the brick paving. There is no evidence that this drawing was ever implemented.

But these various last-minute schemes notwithstanding, the park must be considered complete at the end of 1936.

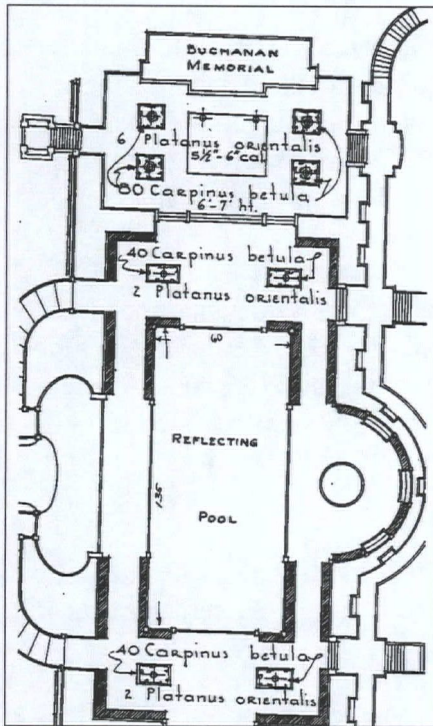
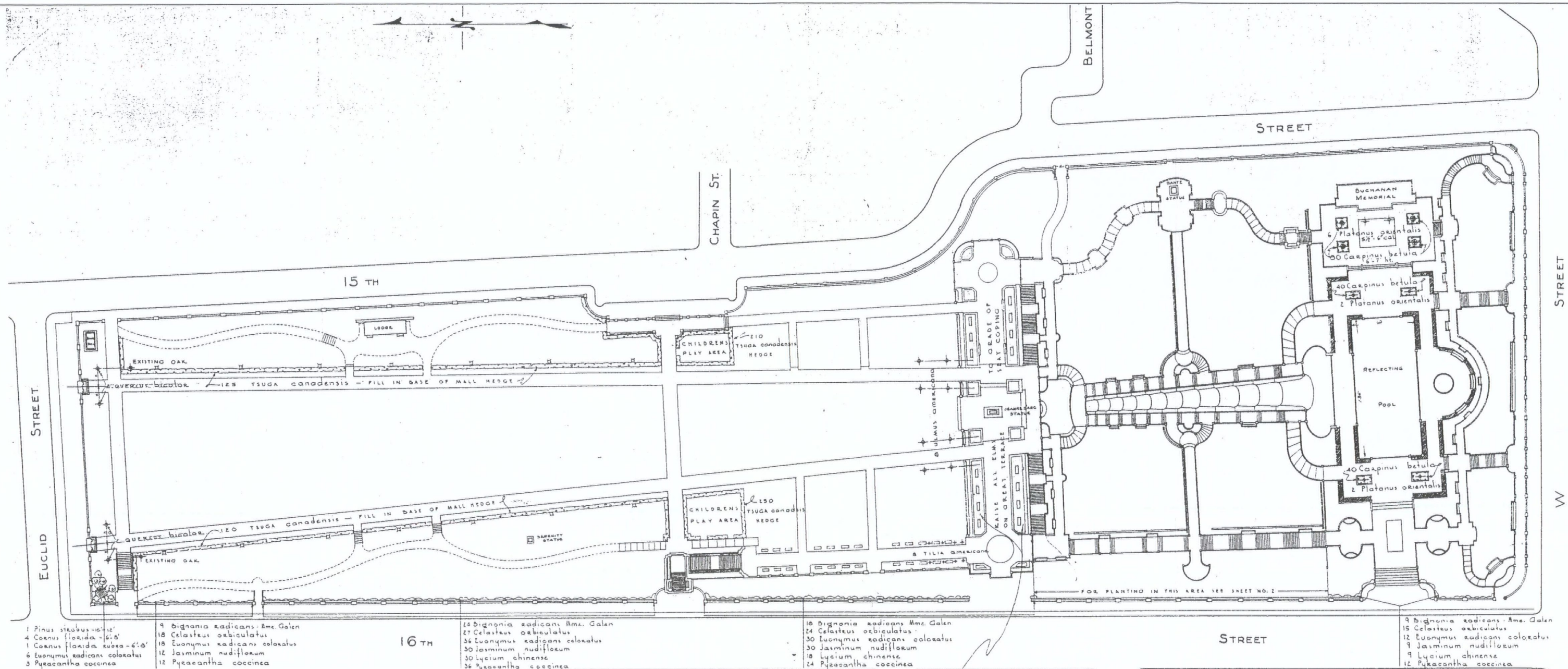


Figure 67: Enlarged version of the lower plaza portion of the plan in figure 66 showing the use of Sycamore and European Hornbeam in the eight planting panels in the lower plaza. Also, the hatched areas are identified as replacing boxwoods proposed and planted that apparently had not done well. (October 16, 1935) (National Archives, RG 79, 41.2-17).

Figure 68: (following) General planting plan dated October 16, 1935 showing final additions and changes to the planting in the park before its completion and official opening to the public, including:

- addition of pairs of swamp white oaks flanking the walks at the northern termini of the mall walks (trees at these locations were deleted in the 1924 revisions to the 1919 Vitale plan)
- addition and/or replacement of shrubs and vines at the inside of the 16th Street retaining walls
- infill planting of hemlock hedges along the mall. This plan shows elimination of hedge niches along the mall by this time.
- planting of hemlock hedges to define mid-mall children's play areas
- addition of eight elms flanking the southern ends of the mall walks just north of the great terrace. Photographic evidence shows that the elms within the mall grass panel were planted, but it is not clear whether there was room to plant the elms at the edges of the oak groves
- raising of elms on the great terrace to the top of the seat coping
- completion of the linden allee at the great terrace end
- replacement of the elms in the tree wells at the corners of the reflecting pool with sycamores and the addition of sycamores in the four planting wells in the Buchanan plaza and underplanting of all the sycamores with clipped masses of hornbeams. It also appears that two sycamores were proposed to be planted in the grass panel directly in front of the Buchanan Memorial but there is no photographic record that this was done.
- installation of "cobblestones" with grass joints to replace the boxwood and pachysandra in the narrow planting strips edging the corners of the reflecting pool and along the outer edges of the main plaza. Early photographs show 4" granite sets in these locations and the sets are present today.

(National Archives RG 79, 41.2-17).



PLANT LIST

TREES	4	Quercus bicolor	5'-5 1/2' cal.
	1	Pinus strobus	10'-12'
	10	Platanus orientalis	5 1/2' 6' cal.
	8	Tilia americana	6' cal.
	8	Ulmus americana	6' cal.
SMALL TREES	4	Cornus florida	6'-8'
	1	Cornus florida rubra	6'-8'
HEDGE PLANTS	160	Carpinus betula	80-6' 7' x 80-3' 4'
	460	Tsuga canadensis	5'-6'
	245	Tsuga canadensis	4' 5'
VINES	60	Bignonia radicans - Mme. Galen	2 yr. Plants
	84	Celastrus orbiculatus	
	102	Euonymus radicans coloratus	
	81	Jasminum nudiflorum	
	57	Lycium chinense	
	87	Pyracantha coccinea	

NOTE

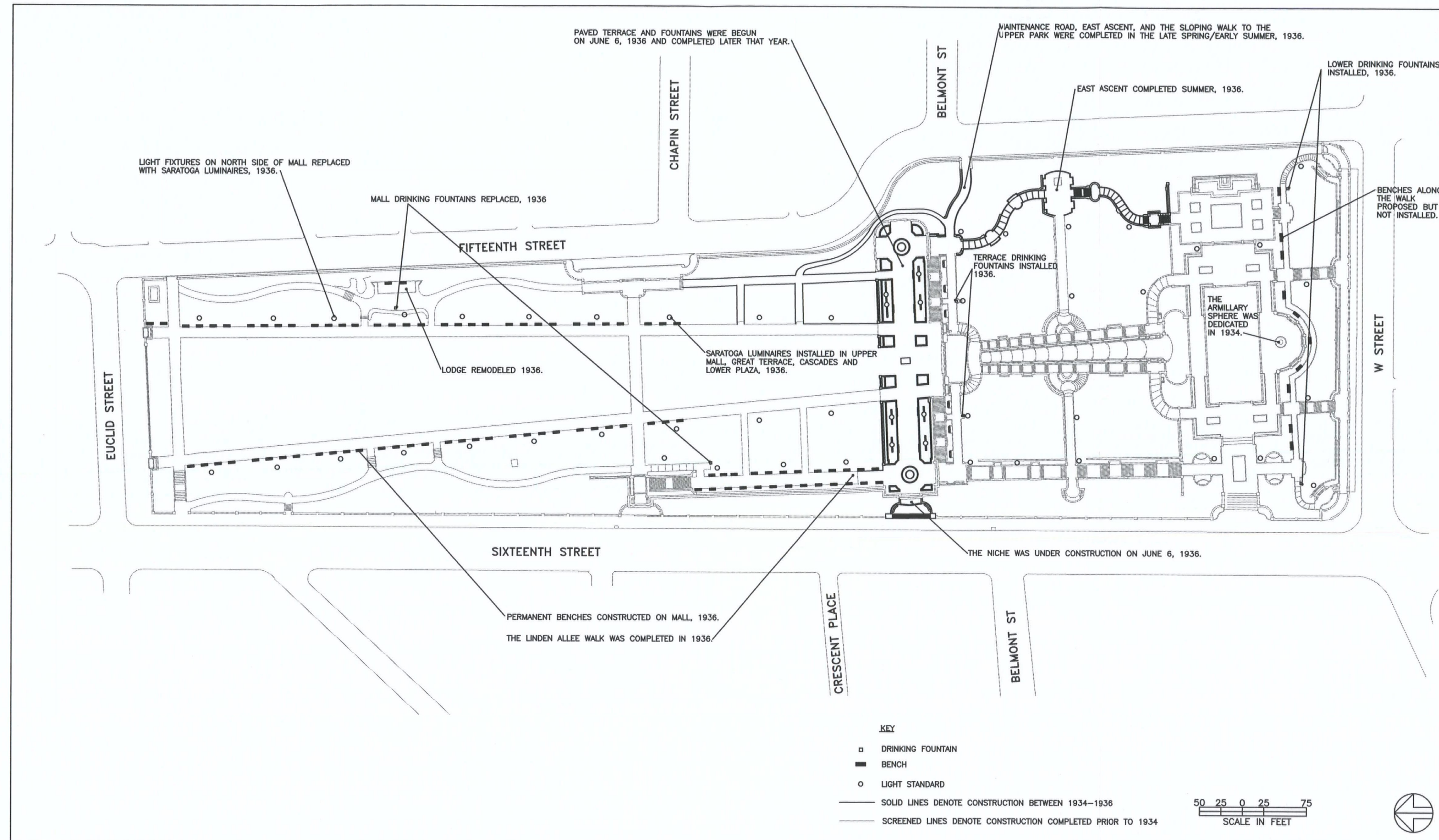
Cross-hatched areas (hatched) in reflecting pool garden to be cobble stone with grass joints (by others)

Areas to be provided with earth and gravel fill after trees are raised & copings constructed.

41.2-17

Dr. by W.S.	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	DATE - 10/16/35
Tr. by W.S.	NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	SHEET NO. 1 OF 2 SHEETS
Cl. by J.L.P.	NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS	OWG. NO.
REVISED -	MERIDIAN HILL PARK	N.C.P. 1750
	GENERAL PLANTING PLAN	
	Scale - 1" = 40'-0"	
	DRAWN BY - EASTERN DIV., BR. OF PLANS & DESIGN	

Figure 68



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

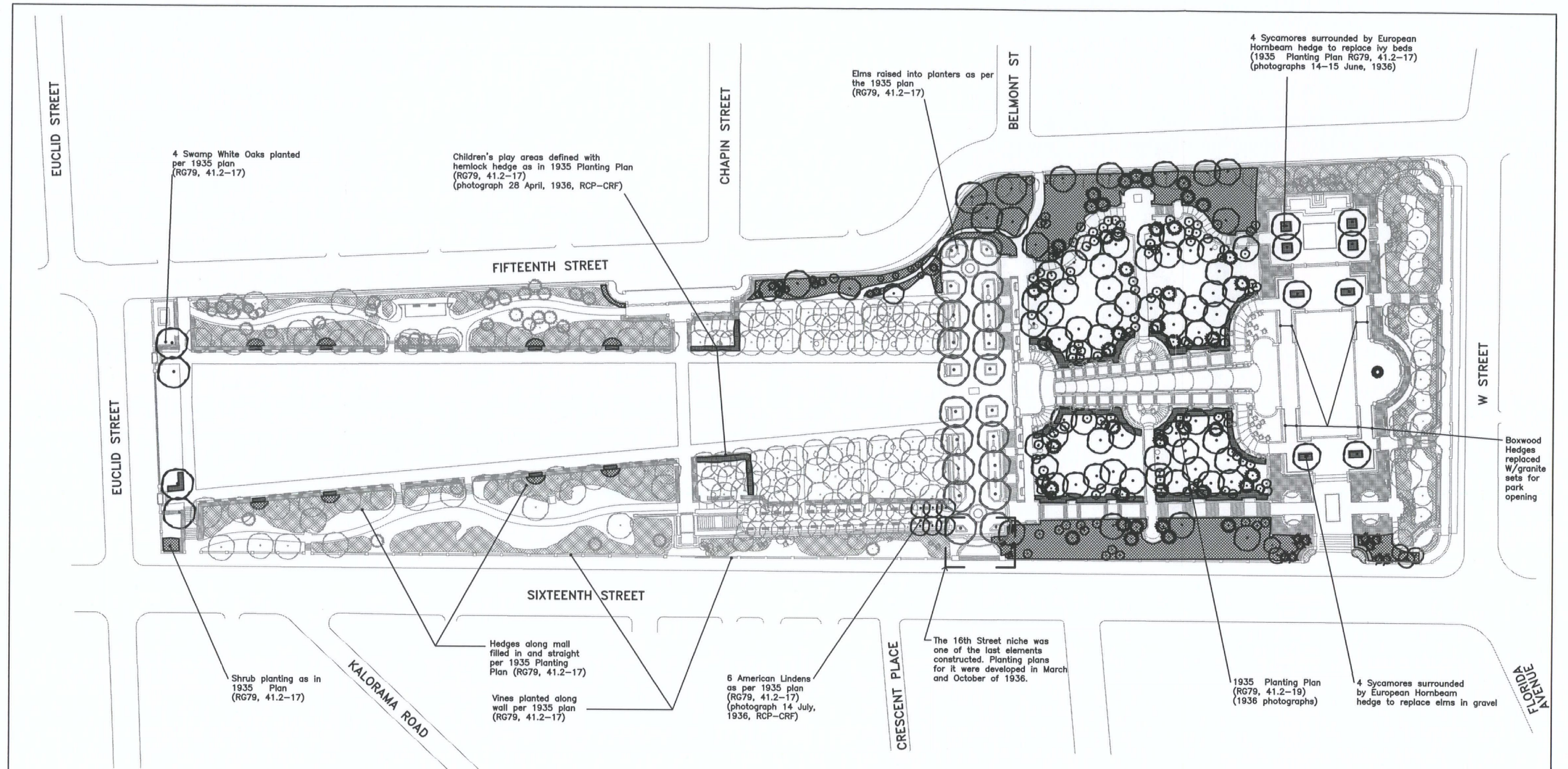
DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

CONSTRUCTION
1934-1936

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 12



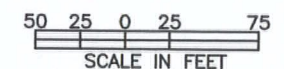
KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- EVERGREEN TREE FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- DECIDUOUS TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD
- EVERGREEN TREE PRE DATING THE TIME PERIOD

- GRASS
- GROUND COVER
- SHRUB MASS
- HEDGE

- BLACK FOR NEW GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES FOR THE TIME PERIOD
- SCREENED SYMBOL FOR GRASS, GROUND COVER, SHRUB, AND HEDGES PREDATING THE TIME PERIOD

NOTE:
SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS
AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

PLANTING 1934-1936

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 13

2.6 1937 - 1997

Meridian Hill Park appears to have been well-maintained and heavily used in the years from the park's official opening to the end of World War II (see Appendix 4). After the park was officially completed in the fall of 1936 (see figure 69), Horace Peaslee continued to make recommendations. In the fall of 1939, Peaslee presented a series of memoranda to the Commission of Fine Arts describing his concerns about design and management issues at the park. These memoranda are included in the minutes of Commission meetings in September and October, and then are detailed in a sketch plan and the minutes of the Commission's meeting on November 17 of that year.¹ The series of memoranda ranged broadly over a number of topics. Only some of Peaslee's recommendations were approved by the Commission.

Peaslee's memos and the Commission minutes mentioned vandalism in the park, a problem even before the official opening in 1936. Upset that the park had suffered heavily from "degradation and misuse," Peaslee advocated increased supervision and maintenance,² arguing that the \$1.6 million spent on the park was surely an investment too great to neglect.³ The Commission agreed with his statements:

"It was agreed that the major problem in connection with park [sic] is one of adequate supervision and maintenance. An investment and valuation totaling over two million dollars, warrants as much supervision as is given to a public building and its grounds; and the investment in plant material in particular is too large to permit the continuance of such vandalism as is now evident."⁴

Following the Commission's approval of some of Peaslee's recommendations, the Chairman of the Commission, Gilmore D. Clarke, sent a letter to the Director of the National Park Service suggesting that the approved recommendations be carried out "from time to time" and offering the assistance of the Commission in any way possible.⁵ However, none of the statuary, construction, and lighting recommendations were implemented, and there is no documentation that any of the planting recommendations were implemented.

1 CFA Minutes, 17 November 1939. The particular letters, memoranda, and CFA minutes referenced here are included in Appendix 4.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

Temporary lighting was installed as an experiment in the niches, fountains, cascades and reflecting pool for the American Institute of Architects convention in September, 1939 (see figures 70 and 71). Subsequently the Commission of Fine Arts approved various wall and step lights, and lighting various fountains and niches.

In a cover letter written to Mr. Newton B. Drury, Director of the National Park Service and dated March 25, 1941, Frederic A. Delano, Chairman of National Capital Parks and Planning Commission referenced a letter he sent to the Secretary of the Interior concerning developments at Meridian Hill Park.⁶ This letter, a summary of issues discussed by Mr. Delano and Mr. Drury,⁷ made recommendations to the Secretary that might curb the vandalism and help to conserve the park features and protect the large government investment. Mr. Delano suggested that the consultant services of Professor Jean Labatut of Princeton should be considered due to his skills in exposition displays. Labatut was designer of the aquatic spectacles at the New York World's Fair, and also of various French and Spanish exposition displays. Professor Labatut had worked with Peaslee several times, providing his professional design opinion. In 1939, Labatut and Peaslee had developed a temporary lighting display of the cascades and fountain jets in preparation for the American Institute of Architects Convention in September of that year and the visit of the Congress of the International Federation of Landscape Architects. It was hoped that Labatut would develop an illumination plan that would increase park use by enhancing the perception of safety, thereby decreasing or eliminating vandalism.⁸ It is not known whether Mr. Labatut was ever engaged to develop, let alone implement, any lighting recommendations.

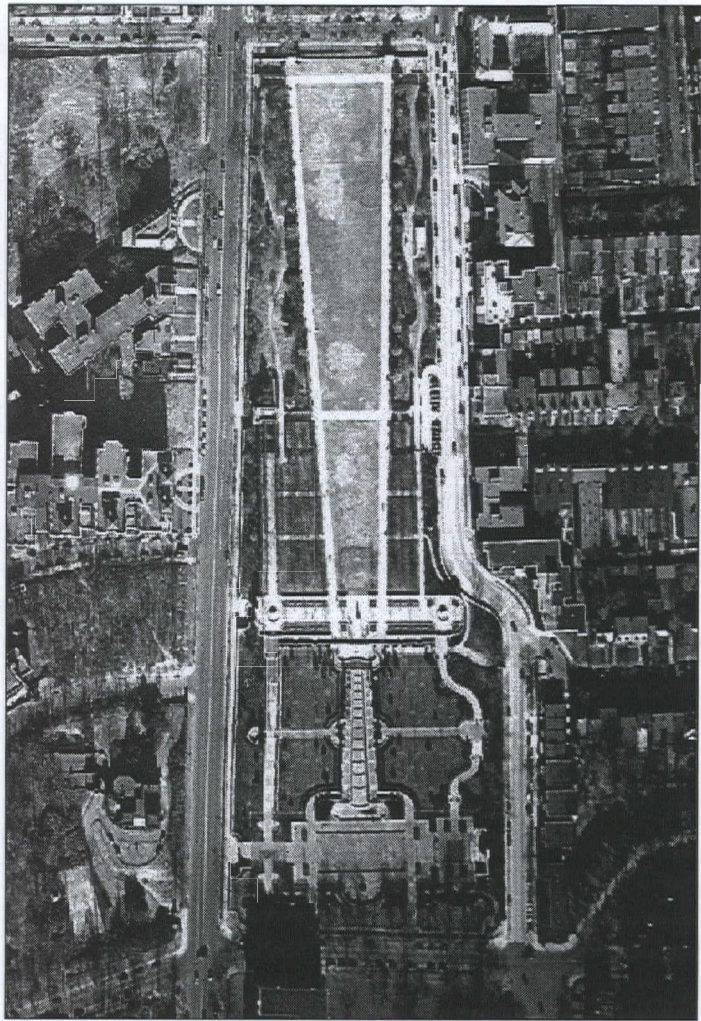


Figure 69: Aerial view of Meridian Hill Park and surrounding neighborhood after construction was completed in 1936 and before demolition of the Henderson Castle in 1949 at the bottom left of the photo (RCP-CRF, no date).

6 Frederic A. Delano, Chairman, National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, to Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, 25 March 1941.

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*

The record on Labatut's involvement and the lighting proposals for the park is not clear. The August/September 1939 Annual Report of the Office of National Capital Parks Superintendent's Report from Frank T. Gartside, Acting Superintendent, reported, "Professor Jean Labatut of Princeton University, world famous authority on illumination, has been employed as a consultant to devise an arrangement for the illumination of the fountain, cascades, pools and other features of Meridian Hill Park. The Service will be host to the Congress of the International Federation of Landscape Architects at this park during the latter part of September, and it is planned to have the lighting equipment installed for use on that occasion. Professor Labatut is the designer of the spectacular lighting effects at the New York World's Fair."

Decorative lighting and lighting for safety had been a topic of discussion for some time. In 1932, Charles Moore unequivocally stated his opposition to night-lighting that would "lower Washington to the movie standards." In reply to Moore's letter, Gilmore Clark, Chair, CFA, said, "I was surprised to learn that night lighting is contemplated in the park. By this, I take it that you mean flood lighting. I am, personally, very much opposed to the flood lighting of any park areas, more particularly of a park area similar to Meridian Hill. Sufficient path lighting, however, to make the park safe for those who use it at night is absolutely necessary, but when the lighting takes on the form of stage lighting, then I think it is time to call a halt. I shall discuss this with Peaslee. I have no idea concerning his views on the matter." (see Appendix 4).

In October 1936, the General Electric Company submitted a report making recommendations for night lighting of the cascades.⁹ This proposal included addition of almost 250 fixtures in white, red, green, and blue. It was not implemented.



Figure 70: View south of the temporary lighting display of cascades installed for the AIA Convention, September, 1939. Note the illumination of the four fountain jets in the reflecting pool, and the trees on the lower plaza (RCP-CRF, September, 1939).

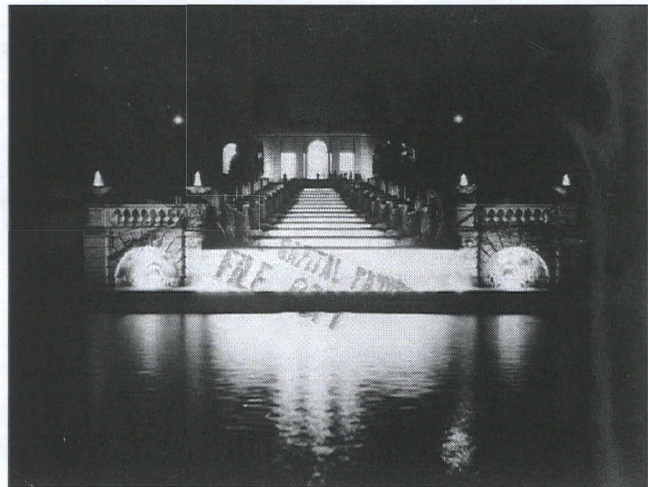


Figure 71: View from the lower plaza of the temporary lighting display of the cascades installed for the AIA Convention, September, 1939. Note the illumination of the four small fountain urns in the foreground (RCP-CRF, September, 1939).

9 Kenneth W. Cobb, Consulting Engineers and Youssef & Associates, Consultants for Plumbing Systems, *Report of Survey and Recommendations for Rehabilitation of Electric and Plumbing Systems for Meridian Hill Park*, (Washington Planning Service Center, National Park Service, photocopy), 20 September 1966, p. 8.

By 1939 and the lighting experiments, Peaslee says "the recent lighting experiments at Meridian Hill Park have been very valuable," and continues talking about "leads...to... possibilities for pageantry and special...occasions..."

Decorative lighting was still being discussed in 1966 in the Cobb report with suggestions for lighting the fountains and cascades, although use of colored light was specifically discouraged. There is no evidence that any of these more or less ambitious lighting schemes were ever executed.

The use of the park continued to increase during the early 1940's (see figures 72, 73, 74 and 75). A series of "Starlight" outdoor concerts in Meridian Hill Park began on July 8, 1941, including performances by such groups as the Salzedo Harp Ensemble, the Kolisch String Quartet, the American Society of Ancient Instruments, and the Von Trapp Family Singers. These concerts ran through the summer of 1944. This use of Washington parks for concerts was not unusual. Rather, it represented a collaborative effort by various government agencies to provide public entertainment and recreation for increased numbers of government workers in the city during the depression, New Deal and War years. For example, riverfront concerts near the site of today's Watergate started in 1935 as a collaboration between the National Capital Parks, the Navy, and the National Symphony Orchestra.

However, lack of funding for maintenance and upkeep during World War II contributed to park deterioration that continued into the 1960's.¹⁰

In a statement and memo presented to the Commission of Fine Arts in April of 1954, Horace Peaslee lamented the fact that the many proposals he had made in 1939 had not been carried out, despite Commission approval of some of them. His 1954 memo reiterated a number of items Peaslee considered the most pressing, including structural



Figure 72: Croquet play on upper mall (RCP-CRF, 1940).

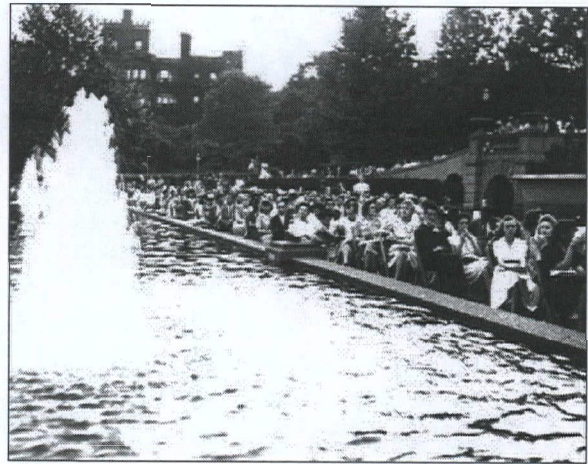


Figure 73: Seating along the reflecting pool at a dance recital, lower plaza. Note Henderson Castle in background (RCP-CRF, July 21, 1942).

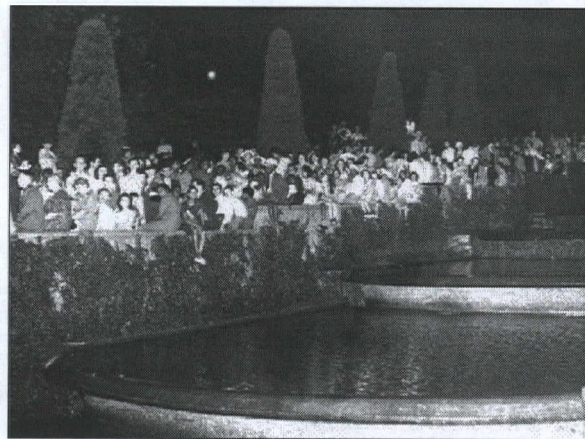


Figure 74: Nighttime concert seating along cascades. Note ivy on wall flanking cascades (RCP-CRF, September 8, 1941).

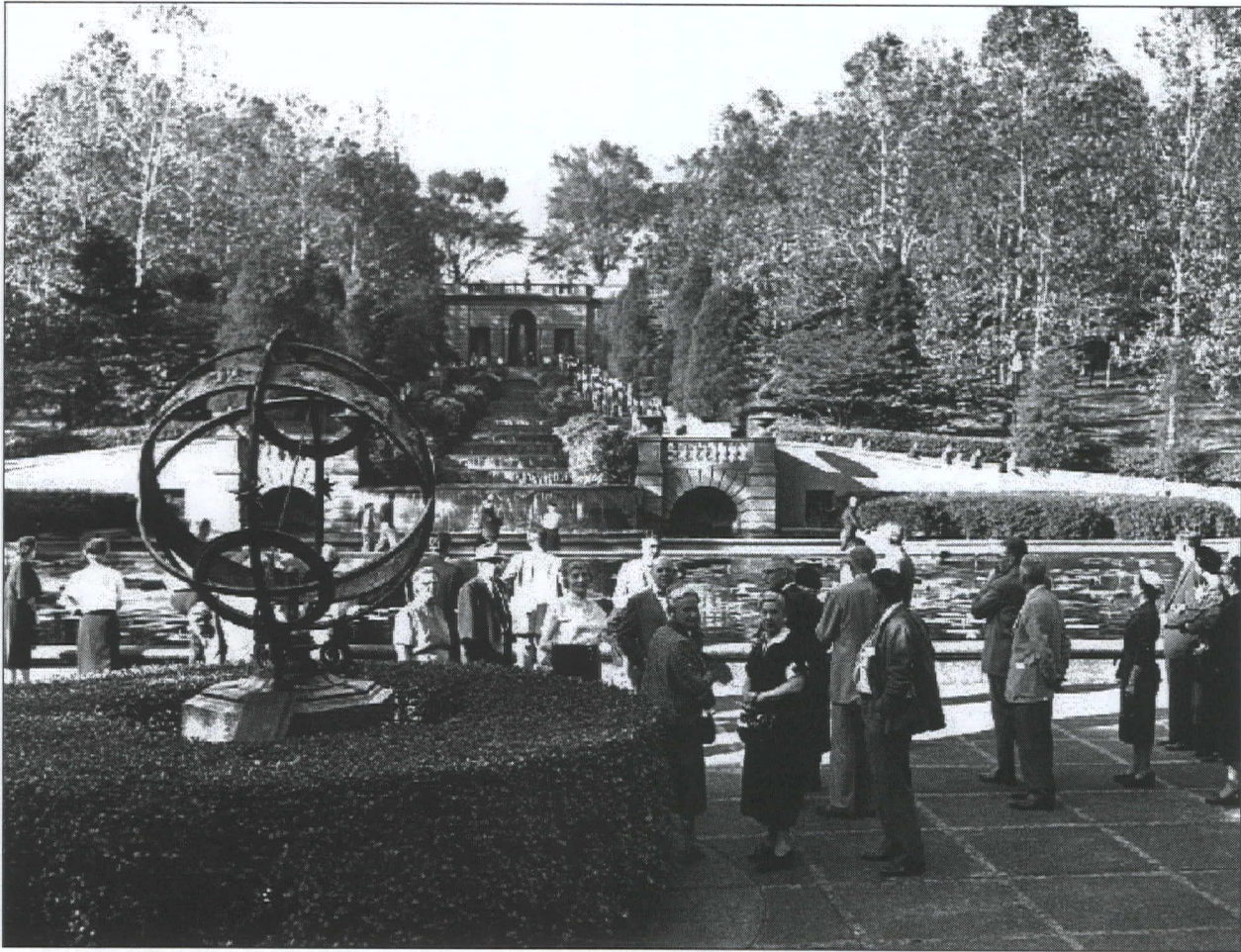


Figure 75: View north to cascades from the exedra, the Armillary Sphere in foreground (RCP-CRF, c. 1944).

conditions such as settlement and spalling of the walls and pavement, wall and walk repairs, and changes in the planting. Relative to the planting, Peaslee suggested special attention be given to cascade enframing and the removal of the scraggly cedars, replacing them with more appropriate material such as English Hollies or Schotti Junipers.¹¹ The memo also suggested, yet again, relocating the Joan of Arc statue either to the lower garden entrance or the north end of the mall, and installing a low circular stage or concert platform as suggested previously but not implemented.

In May 1954, the Commission of Fine Arts forwarded a copy of the Peaslee memo to the Director of the National Park Service. In the letter accompanying the Peaslee memo, the Commission asked the National Park Service to make budget provisions for the suggested rehabilitation work, following a thorough study of the park's present condition. The Commission also made it clear that, although Peaslee's memo contained suggestions that had already been approved in 1939, the fifteen-year time lapse would make it necessary for the Commission to reconsider the previously approved suggestions. Because of this re-approval process required by the Commis-

11 Horace W. Peaslee to the Commission of Fine Arts, (memo), 8 April 1954. The particular letters, memoranda, and CFA minutes referenced here are included in Appendix 4.

sion, and because of continued lack of funding, Peaslee's 1954 suggestions were not implemented.

Beginning in the early 1960's, Meridian Hill Park regained much of the popularity it had lost after the end of World War II. On July 4, 1963, the summer "Starlight" concert series was reinstated. The performance, by the Watergate Symphony Band, marked a temporary end to the post-World War II decline in park visitorship.



Figure 76: An outdoor concert on the lower terrace (MRCE, 4 July 1963)

In 1964, the Meridian Towers apartment building was constructed south of the park on what was the dining terrace and garden of the Roosevelt hotel/apartment. While the allowable height of buildings south of the park was legally restricted to 85 feet, Meridian Towers exceeded that height and was constructed to a height of ten stories. The building cut off much of the view of Washington from the terrace of the park, despite objections having been made.¹²

In 1966, a report prepared for the National Park Service by Kenneth W. Cobb and Youssef & Associates Consulting Engineers made recommendations for the rehabilitation of the electric and plumbing systems in the park at an estimated cost of \$3 million.¹³ The engineering consultants conducting the survey found that most of the wiring and plumbing in the park was in a state of serious disrepair. They also found that, in general, the problem of vandalism was a serious one, and was reflected in the current condition of the park. According to the report, "Everywhere one finds evidence of deliberate damage. The glass of the post-top walkway fixtures requires constant replacement because of deliberate breakage and the water of the various pools is constantly being fouled with trash and worse. Nature has taken a toll over the years, but an irresponsible public has materially hastened the process."¹⁴

In a section of the report entitled, "*Survey and Report of Existing Conditions*," existing conditions of electrical services, electrical distribution, and electrical systems were analyzed. The chapter, "*Electrical Services*," detailed three distinct power sources from different Potomac Electrical Power Company (PEPCO) lines with the voltage of each. The catalog numbers of the lighting fixtures, steel poles and globes found in the park were also listed in this section. The chapter, "*Electrical Distribution*," referred to three existing conditions plans illustrating the extent of the distribution.

12 Steven Strach, Cultural Resource Management Specialist, Rock Creek Park, and clipping files, National Archives RG 66 Entry 17, Box 104.

13 Keith R. Polhemus, Acting Superintendent, National Capital Parks-North to Mrs. C. Morton of 1014 Euclid Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 2 August 1967.

14 Cobb and Youssef, p. 19.

The “*Electric Systems - Existing Conditions*” chapter analyzes individual zones, detailing conduit, wire, switches and other pertinent devices. In summary, the report stated that most wire and conduit in the park was deteriorating and needed replacement. The last major electrical change, according to the report, occurred in 1956 when PEPCO revised the walkway lighting, replacing all existing lights and installing new post and post-top lights throughout the park.

The section on plumbing was divided into four chapters detailing (1) the existing drainage system, (2) circulating water systems, (3) the city water system, and (4) additional areas in need of improvement. The chapter, “*Drainage Systems*,” included the sanitary system,¹⁵ serving the main toilets below the great terrace stairs and the restrooms in the 15th Street lodge. It also included the storm drainage systems consisting of gutters, catch drains, and storm lines.

Identified problems involved clogged or nearly-clogged pipes that restricted the flow of waste and storm water, useless drains due to settling and dislocated pavement, and general deterioration of fixtures and piping. Also, catch basins and trench drains had become filled with dirt and leaves, hampering their ability to remove water adequately.

The “*Circulating Water System*” chapter described the systems associated with the pump, the reflecting pool, the cascades, the fountains, and the pump room reservoir. This chapter detailed the supply and return lines for each of these areas, and located and described drains, pumps, screens and other operating devices. Also described in great detail are the different operating functions of individual devices, and reasons behind the design of the system.

Problems with the circulation systems identified at this time included rusted and leaky piping, abandoned fountain displays, dangerous electrical conditions, inadequate or restricted water flow, deterioration of structural steel, old and rusty valves, and defective gauges. Together, these problems resulted in the inability to run fountains on the east and west sides of the great terrace, the capping of the reflecting pool fountains, and the shutting down of the fountains to the east and west of the cascades on the lower level of the terrace.

In the chapter entitled, “*The City Water System*,” supply lines feeding the fountains and all adjoining water displays were described in detail, including location, size and valve characteristics. The smaller lines associated with sprinklers, drinking fountains and restrooms were also detailed. Again, problems with old and rusty pipes and fittings were found to cause leaks and clogged pipes restricted flow. Old and faulty fixtures in the restrooms, drinking fountains and sprinklers resulted in a continuous flow of unchecked city water. Valves throughout the park were deteriorating and required replacement.

The final area of study, “*Further Possible Areas of Improvement*,” examined heating and ventilation in the restrooms, the control and pump rooms, and the police office adjacent to the restrooms—in an attempt to identify problems associated with extreme temperatures and varying humidities. Due to conditions in the pump room, high levels of humidity had caused severe deterioration of the electrical equipment and fixtures. Conditions in the restrooms and police office were also determined to be substandard.

15 The drainage system at the park was approximately 35 years old at the time of the Cobb report.

The pages following the existing conditions analysis of the report contained original photographs taken by the consulting authors providing a visual record of the conditions described in the text. The photographs were grouped according to topic, and each had a descriptive line of text, along with a number, to help identify the conditions being documented. The photographs were identified by number on three plan sheets produced for the report.

The final chapter of the report included recommendations for addressing the identified problems. As before, this chapter began with the electrical systems, and recommended that the whole electrical distribution system be replaced. It was also suggested that the post-top luminaires be modified in order to provide more light and increase safety in the park. Concern was expressed about the step lights, decorative fixtures and various rooms; it was suggested that higher wattages be used, along with tamper-resistant fixtures.

Recommendations in the report included a suggestion to illuminate the cascades and the fountains (with incandescent lighting). New aerating nozzles for the fountain heads were also suggested. The report described very specific ideas for new fountain nozzle types in the reflecting pool with underwater lighting focused on them.

To correct the restricted flow of water through both the sanitary and storm systems, it was recommended that they be cleaned by a rotary pipe cleaner. General maintenance of the restrooms was advised, along with better ventilation. Periodic cleaning of trench drains and floor drains was recommended to ensure proper drainage. Revised grading at catch basins and gutters was called for, since settling and erosion had left many of these structures higher than the areas they were supposed to drain.

Recommendations related to the circulating water system included replacing defective pipes and fittings and reducing the amount of deterioration in the pump room by placing protective covers on any fixture susceptible to extreme temperature and humidity. Since the existing pump could not adequately supply the entire system with the required water flow, a larger pump was suggested. The report recommended that all corroded valves, fittings, gauges and accessories be replaced.

The report recommended replacing the city water service for the upper park with a larger pipe. Other recommendations about cleaning and protection of water lines in the park were also made, including a plan to modify the lodge restrooms because of an inappropriate layout and inadequate fixtures and maintenance. Overall, the restrooms needed better maintenance, newer toilets, sinks, and fixtures, and more vandal-resistant design. New drinking fountains were proposed, broken ones were to be put back into service, and the remainder cleaned. It was also suggested that the hose-fed sprinklers currently being used in the park be replaced with an automatic sprinkler system.

In addition to these recommendations, the report recommended that an exhaust fan be installed in the pump room in order to eliminate destructive condensation. Exhaust systems were also suggested for the restrooms, and electric heating was proposed for all restrooms and the police office. It is difficult to determine when they were done, but many of the Cobb Report recommendations appear to have been implemented.

Important projects taking place in the park in 1967 included an effort to control rats, a city-wide problem prominently discussed in the newspapers of the time. The United Planning Organization-Neighborhood Youth Corps involved in cleaning the park along with National Capital Parks-North, averaged 16 hours per day along with about 30 hours per day from the UPO-NYC for general maintenance activities.¹⁶

Following the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 5, 1968, riots damaged some businesses east of the park. Later in 1968, the "Summer in the Parks" concert series—initiated to provide community activities in a number of parks after the riots—opened its season in Meridian Hill Park with a performance by Pearl Bailey in front of 20,000 people.

The Armillary Sphere was damaged in the late 1960's and was subsequently removed from the park in the early 1970's for repair and cleaning.

In April of 1969, on the one-year anniversary of King's death, a leader of the Black United Front began referring to the park as "Malcolm X Park." In January of 1970 a bill (H. R. 15472) was introduced in Congress to change the name officially from Meridian Hill Park to Malcolm X Park. The bill was not enacted since the park contains a memorial to President Buchanan and thus can not be named for anyone else.¹⁷

In 1974, Meridian Hill Park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Inclusion on the National Register did help gain some attention for the park, and in 1974, an attempt was made to catch up on park maintenance. In fiscal year 1974, \$149,332 was spent to repair walks, restrooms at the lodge, benches, and re-sod the mall area.¹⁸

In 1975, the National Park Service prepared a status report detailing existing conditions at Meridian Hill Park. The report concluded that, "the present conditions of the park are the gross result of overuse and insufficient funds applied and/or available for other than ad hoc grounds maintenance with little for preventive facilities and grounds maintenance."¹⁹ The report recommended that a special allocation of construction and/or maintenance funds be made in fiscal year 1976 and beyond to significantly upgrade Meridian Hill Park. This was done in hopes that work begun in 1974 could be continued in the coming years and that the routine maintenance that had been neglected for years could be resumed.

In addition to detailing the poor condition of the park, the 1975 status report also mentioned the concern of community groups, such as the Meridian Hill Citizens Association, about escalating crime and the possible use of the park for Bicentennial celebrations the following year. The need for adequate lighting was listed as a priority for park safety.

16 Polhemus, p. 2.

17 Director of the National Park Service to the Legislative Council of the House of Representatives. 2 April 1970, Rock Creek Park, Cultural Resource Files, Meridian Hill Park, National Park Service.

18 Ira J. Hutchison, Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, to the Director, National Capital Parks, National Park Service, (memo), 9 May 1975.

19 *Ibid.*

The report listed recommendations that would initiate a program of park restoration. The Superintendent requested two things:

- 1) a special allocation of FY 1976 construction and/or maintenance funds to significantly upgrade Meridian Hill Park; and that
- 2) Meridian Hill be given the highest possible priority for construction and restoration dollars to be allocated in the upcoming years.

The report included several appendices, the first of which listed operating expenditures during the years 1973 and 1974, and a projected estimate for 1975. The second estimated that priority projects for 1976 would cost \$148,000. The third appendix, which referred to the 1966 Cobb and Youssef report, was an itemized list of seven projects dealing with site restoration, including repair of the upper 16th Street retaining wall, replanting and repaving and associated costs.

Although both the 1966 report and the placement of the park on the National Register of Historic Places had contributed to renewed interest in the park, the 1975 status report was a turning point in the park's rejuvenation. After almost 40 years of neglect and decline, National Park Service support was focused on the park and aggressive steps were taken to improve it.

In late 1975, inquiries were made about the location of the Armillary Sphere. A hand written letter dated December 5, 1975, to "Al" by "Tommy," described the events after the damaged sphere was removed from the park. According to the letter, the "sundial" was removed from the park in November 1972 and placed in "the metal crafts shop" until the middle of March of the following year. It was then transported to the Fort Totten maintenance yard for storage by staff of the East Potomac maintenance yard.²⁰ The letter stated that a "Mr. Hanley of National Capital Parks East may be able to help in locating the damaged sphere as he was at the Fort Totten maintenance yard at the time the sphere was stored there."²¹ The letter concluded by stating that the Superintendent of National Capital Parks-West felt that no funds were available for repair of the Armillary Sphere. Included with this letter are nine small color photographs of a National Park Service employee displaying pieces of the damaged Armillary Sphere. On January 29, 1973, Robert Giannetti, an architectural sculptor, provided an estimate to repair the sphere by repinning all the joints, rewelding, and putting a new patina on the entire piece. According to Mr. Giannetti, the Bedi-Makkey Art Foundry of Brooklyn, New York, could restore the sphere for \$9,750 provided that all the pieces were available.²² At present, the whereabouts of the Armillary Sphere is unknown. The small cherub figurine, which was part of the sphere, and the bronze dial correction table are in storage at the National Park Service MRCE facility.

20 "Al" to "Tommy," 5 December 1975, Rock Creek Park, Cultural Resource Files, Meridian Hill Park, NCR, NPS.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Conley, National Capital Parks-East, National Capital Parks, National Park Service from Robert Giannetti, Giannetti's Studio, 3806 38th Street, Brentwood, MD, 29 January 1973, Rock Creek Park, Cultural Resource File Meridian Hill Park, National Capital Region, National Park Service.

In 1976, as part of the Bicentennial celebration, the National Park Service led civic groups and volunteers in an effort to clean up and make improvements to the park in time for the Nation's 200th birthday. More than \$60,000 was spent installing lighting and plantings, replacing all of the sod on the mall and selected side panels, trimming shrubs, fixing benches in the park, cleaning and refilling the children's sandbox, repairing and replacing, as necessary, trash baskets on the upper level of the park, mulching of shrubbery beds, establishing a full-time grounds maintenance crew for the park, initiating regular patrols by Park Police, and maintaining the operation of the cascades and fountain jets in the reflecting pool.²³ The National Park Service had taken the Joan of Arc statue out of the park for repairs sometime prior to 1976, and in May of 1976, plans were made to return the rejuvenated equestrienne.²⁴

On May 15, 1976, after all of the improvements were completed, the National Park Service held a special "reopening" ceremony to show community members what had been accomplished in the park. The National Park Service had two goals for the reopening: (1) to recognize those organizations and individuals who had helped to clean up the park, and (2) to encourage community members to take some interest and responsibility in maintaining the improvements.²⁵ The clean-up and reopening of the park were considered a success. A May 21, 1976, editorial in the *Washington Post* applauded the work of the National Park Service and expressed optimism that the park would not return to its prior condition.

In 1977, the engineering company Symphonic Fountains, was hired to perform an in-depth study of the fountain complex and submit a report detailing the condition of all equipment, the changes or repairs to be made and the functions of the component pieces. The report contained drawings documenting the operation of the system and assigning numbers to the system's valves; drawings for various relatively minor repairs at the reservoir and to provide stainless steel strainers and security caps at most of the fountain drains and valve access caps; specifications and recommendations for renovation of the fountain operating systems.²⁶ Most of the repair work proposed appears to have been done.²⁷

Another significant report, dated June 1977, "Meridian Hill Park Retaining Walls," prepared by civil engineer Dean Robinson of the Denver Service Center, National Park Service, proposed extensive wall repair and restoration. The report detailed problems that had contributed to the state of the walls. Recommendations included: repair drainage behind the low wall on 16th Street; repair warped wall and railings on the high wall along 16th Street; repair the tie-back sys-

23 Ira J. Hutchison, Superintendent, National Capital Parks-East, to Director of National Capital Parks, National Park Service, (memo), 10 May 1976.

24 Darwina Neal, Landscape Architect, Design Services, National Capital Region, National Park Service, to Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, (memo), 18 March 1976.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Henry N. Hunsicker, Symphonic Fountains, Inc., to Mr. Burnice Kearney, Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, National Capital Region, National Park Service, 27 May 1977. We have examined copies of cover letters, the second part of the report with specifications and recommendations, and the analysis and documentation of existing conditions.

27 See *Meridian Hill Park Fountain System Physical Analysis and Conditions Assessment* detailed review of these reports as related to the fountain system and for summary of work done to the fountain systems in this time period.

tem to stabilize the high retaining walls; remove and reset the fountain on the west side of the great terrace to allow installation of tie-backs or counter forts; design a new drainage system for the whole upper park level²⁸; repair/restore railings and balustrades as deemed necessary; repair and restore the entry steps at Chapin Street; replace sections of deteriorated paving; and water-proof the interior of the planters adjacent to the upper entrance walls at 16th Street. The cost estimate for these improvements was \$669,000.²⁹ This report ultimately became part of the 1982 walls and walkways restoration plan.

In 1978 political demonstrations in the park increased. This, along with an abundance of crime and other anti-social activities, prompted Eugene J. Colbert, Superintendent of National Capital Parks-East, to ask for increased police surveillance in the park.³⁰

In the early 1980s, management of the park was transferred from National Capital Parks-East to the jurisdiction of Rock Creek Park. At that time, maintenance efforts focused on proper plant maintenance, plant removal, plant replacement, the removal and relocation of dumpsters, less obtrusive signs, and a general "facelift." The 1977 wall repair report was reviewed in February, 1981 and an updated cost estimate was prepared.³¹ Later in that year, the repair of walls and related structures was once again considered, as well as an investigation of John J. Earley's method of exposed aggregate concrete construction. Construction documents to stabilize the upper level 16th Street retaining walls (including the addition of deadmen to the original tie-back system),³² to provide proper drainage above and below the high wall, to replace deteriorated exposed aggregate concrete walks and steps, to repair spalled areas of walls and railings, and to re-establish the original plantings along the wall were prepared by the Denver Service Center of the NPS.³³ The project also included regrading the asphalt path from the upper 16th Street entrance and removal of the step ramps, making the upper mall accessible from that entrance. The contract work was based on previous structural reports including the Federal Highway Administration's Soils and Foundation Report (report #17-81), a "Field Report" prepared by Structural Engineer Terry Wong and soils engineer Ellis from the Denver Service Center's Mid Atlantic / North Atlantic Team of the National Park Service, and analysis by the staff of Design Services, National Capital Region, National Park Service. The proposed work was estimated to cost about \$325,000³⁴ and was contracted in April of 1982.³⁵

28 Cobb had designed a new storm water drainage system for the upper park in 1966, but it was not built.

29 Dean Robinson, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, NPS, Engineering Report - Task Directive #413, *Meridian Hill Park Retaining Walls*, June 1977.

30 Eugene J. Colbert, Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, National Capital Region, to Chief, U. S. Park Police, (memo), 11 September 1978.

31 Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, NPS, to Regional Director, National Capital Region, NPS, (memo), 1 April 1981.

32 Robert G. Stanton, Regional Director, National Capital Region, NPS, to Mr. Robert Moore, State Historic Preservation Officer, District of Columbia, Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, 11 March 1982.

33 Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, NPS, to Regional Director, National Capital Region, NPS, (memo), 27 November 1981. Refers to drawings: Meridian Hill - Restoration of Walls and Walks.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*

In December 1981, a memorandum from the Landscape Architect, Design Services Division of the National Capital Region of the National Park Service expressed concern for maintaining the integrity of original design elements when repair or restoration work was completed, especially in regard to restoring the walls and repairing the asphalt sidewalks of the upper level of the park.³⁶ Design professionals of the National Capital Region, National Park Service, who were most familiar with the park and its history, provided invaluable review and comment on construction documents prepared by other National Park Service offices.

In a letter to David A. Clarke, Council Member of the District of Columbia, James Redmond, Superintendent of Rock Creek Park suggested that the park be closed after dark between November 1 and April 30 to reduce crime and drug use. Another prevalent problem at the time, both in the park and throughout the city, was that of rodent control. A number of recommendations for controlling and ultimately eliminating the rat population in the park were made in a June, 1981 report to James Redmond, Superintendent of Rock Creek Park, by Kevin Hackett, Ph.D. of the John Muir Institute for Environmental Studies.³⁷ The principal recommendation was to retrofit the existing tulip-type trash receptacles with galvanized steel bottoms to prevent easy access to trash bags by rodents. Since the tulip-type trash receptacle was a standard design used in many NCR parks, the steel bottoms became a standard component of that design.

Other recommendations, also applicable to other NCR parks, included emptying trash from containers daily, pruning plant material to prevent opportunities for nesting, patching holes in the maintenance building walls, baiting rat holes with pesticide, and recording rodent control measures to measure progress. Many of these approaches were supported by the Design Services Division with the notable exception of pruning plant material. Specific reference was made to improper and unnecessary pruning, which in the past, has damaged plant material in the park.³⁸

Vandalism was common during these years as well. The theft of 10 brass drainage grates was reported in December of 1981,³⁹ and graffiti clean-up was a continuous job for the National Park Service maintenance staff. Despite the crime problems in the late 1970's and early 1980's, the National Park Service began to focus on the future of Meridian Hill. During this period, the National Park Service proposed many maintenance and rehabilitation projects, including the repair of walkways, fountains, walls, light fixtures, and the replacement of many of the original plantings. Only some of these proposals were implemented.

By February 1982, the construction plans for restoration of walls and walks were modified to include installation of a lower entrance accessible ramp on 16th Street and repairs to damaged and deteriorated paving and steps in the lower level of the park. The cost estimate for these im-

36 Landscape Architect, Design Services Division of the NCR, NPS, to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, National Capital Region, National Park Service, (memo), 10 December 1981.

37 Kevin J. Hackett, Ph. D., Eastern Coordinator, John Muir Institute for Environmental Studies, to James Redmond, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, 26 June 1981.

38 Landscape Architect, Design Services Division, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, (memo), 15 July 1981.

39 James Redmond, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, to Lt. Ellison, U.S. Park Police, D-3 Substation, (memo), 29 December 1981.

provements, known as Phase I, which were to be completed by the end of the Fiscal Year 1982, was \$342,000. Proposed Phase II plans included rehabilitation of the great terrace overlook paving, planters and fountains, and miscellaneous exposed aggregate patching and replacement of urns on the lower park walls at an additional cost of \$338,000. Phase I and II totals were then estimated to be \$680,000.⁴⁰ Later discussions dismissed the plans for a universally accessible entrance on 16th Street so that studies for a "...less visible location..." could be done.⁴¹ It was also decided that subsurface drainage construction was not needed since a series of observation wells were all dry.⁴² Once stabilization of the upper 16th Street retaining walls and replacement of the original system of tie-backs and removed paving were completed, 32 new Linden (*Tilia cordata*) trees were planted to replace those removed during construction. Other plantings installed at this time included 11 American Elm (*Ulmus americana*) trees on the great terrace and nearly 1,000 Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*) plants on the slope below the 16th Street retaining wall. The 1982 drawings for the paving and tie-back work do not show the benches along the Linden Allee, so it appears that they may already have been gone by 1982.

In the mid-eighties, the Chief of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) and Landscape Architect of the Design Services Division, National Capital Region, discussed the need to have HABS document more properties in the National Capital Region. The National Capital Region, National Park Service agreed to fund documentation of Meridian Hill Park as a pilot project to document a "formal" designed historic landscape.⁴³ The completed HABS report served as the basis for a number of lectures and articles by HABS and other National Park Service staff helping publicize the importance of the park and gain support for restoring it.

In 1985, NPS developed plans to replace rusted lamp standards along the upper mall. The plans also called for moving the two symmetrical rows of light standards inward and placing them closer to the walks along the mall between park benches at regular intervals to move them out from under tree branches that blocked their light. The justification of the move was, "Although the movement of the standards will constitute a design change, we feel that it will be minor, justified by increased crime protection, and in keeping with the park's formal design."⁴⁴ The project was reviewed and approved in accord with Section 106 of the 1966 Historic Preservation Act.

Due to drug and crime problems, the restrooms in the lodge along 15th Street were finally closed. Subsequently, at the request of the park, plans were prepared to convert the lodge into an open-air pavilion. Although the construction documents were completed and approved in 1987,

40 Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, NPS, to Regional Director, National Capital Region, NPS, (memo), 9 February 1982.

41 Landscape Architect, Design Services Division of the National Capital Region, National Park Service, to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, National Capital Region, National Park Service, (memo), 18 February 1982.

42 *Ibid.*

43 Darwina Neal, Landscape Architect, National Capital Region, National Park Service, and Paul Dolinsky, Chief of HABS, (telephone interview), 3 June 1996.

44 Robert Stanton, Regional Director, National Capital Region, to Mr. Robert R. Garvey, Jr., Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 5 March 1985.

funds were not available for several years. Construction was completed in 1993 at a cost of \$58,508.

In 1988, it was determined that replicating the missing Armillary Sphere to its original specifications would cost approximately \$90,000 based on an estimate prepared by Rambush Studios of New York City, an architectural metal design and fabrication company.⁴⁵

In late 1990, a new, comprehensive cost estimate was completed for the restoration of every facet of the park. Prepared by the National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Applied Archeology Office, the estimate was composed of four phases of construction and general restoration of the park. The total estimate for improvements, including design costs, was almost \$5.5 million. The report listed nearly every aspect of the park, including walls, walks, drainage, irrigation, plumbing, wiring, and plantings.⁴⁶

In 1990, a citizens group known as Friends of Meridian Hill was formed in an attempt to increase community awareness, improve the park's image, and decrease crime in the park. The Friends group also wanted to bring back the outdoor concerts that had occurred periodically throughout the park's history. This group of citizens helped increase public and private awareness and Congressional support of the park.

One effort of the Friends focused on trying to implement various design changes that had been approved over the years by the Commission of Fine Arts but never implemented. One of these changes was a proposal to relocate the Joan of Arc statue to a position in the lower plaza near the 16th Street entrance. The plan was supported by the Societe' des Femmes de France, which had donated the statue, and recommended by the Superintendent, but an August memorandum to the Superintendent of Rock Creek Park written by the Associate Regional Director of Professional Services stated:

"...acceptance of the Joan of Arc sculpture as a gift from the Societe' des Femmes de France was approved by Congress on March 20, 1922, the location of the statue on the Great Terrace of Meridian Hill Park was approved by Commission of Fine Arts on November 11, 1921, and the statue was dedicated on that site in 1922 by the wife of the French Ambassador and Mrs. Warren G. Harding, wife of the President of the United States. Although subsequent Commissions of Fine Arts approved moving the statue to the northern end of the mall in 1930, and to the lower terrace in 1939, the Joan of Arc Statue remains at its original site. As such, the site where it has been for almost seventy years is the historic one."⁴⁷

45 Acting Chief, Design Services Division, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS (memo), 30 December 1998.

46 Ben Biderman, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, to Terry Carlstrom of NCR, NPS (fax), 2 August 1990.

47 Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent of Rock Creek Park (memo), 4 August 1991.

The memo continued, citing the potential damage to the historic fabric, the feasibility of the proposal, the landscape design questions and the questionable relevance of the 1939 Fine Arts Commission approval. The move was therefore denied by the National Park Service, which supported retaining the original design, thus protecting its historic integrity. The reason for this decision can be found in both the Federal "Standards and Guidelines for Preserving Cultural Landscapes" and the National Park Service management policy pertaining to the treatment of historic properties, which are intended to assist users in determining appropriate historic preservation treatments. The issue of relocating Joan of Arc, and so "changing" the original design of the park as it was completed in 1936, is contrary to Federal standards and practice. The Standards and Guidelines state:

"The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided."⁴⁸

In addition, National Park Service - 28, "Management of Cultural Landscapes," states:

"Designs that were never executed historically are not constructed."⁴⁹

Police patrols in the park were increased in March 1992. This had an effect on the perceived safety of the park, and with the subsequent increase in public attendance, community awareness and use, crime in the park was reduced.

The Friends also expressed a desire for more dedicated play space in the park. In April 1993, the National Park Service agreed to move ahead with the rehabilitation of an existing play area at 15th and Euclid Street⁵⁰ and to evaluate the need for additional play areas at a later date. Construction documents to rehabilitate the Euclid and 15th Street play area were completed in 1994, but the project was put on hold pending the completion of the Cultural Landscape Report and in response to concerns about the proximity of the play area to the street and traffic.

Security continued to be a major concern in the park. Many attempts were made to increase visibility by maintaining shrubs with proper pruning, removing areas of unkempt plantings, and reducing the number of hiding places for criminal activities. At this time, the lodge was being converted into an open-air pavilion. The Friends of Meridian Hill were helping a full-time maintenance staff in cleaning leaves and making sure the park's image was enhanced.

Lighting the cascades and fountains was discussed in the last years of the park's construction, but was apparently not implemented, although experimental temporary lighting of the cascades and other water features was installed in 1939. In 1993, the Friends commissioned a lighting de-

48 "Standards and Guidelines for Preserving Cultural Landscapes," The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 1996, prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance.

49 National Park Service, Cultural Resource Management, NPS-28, Management of Cultural Landscapes, National Park Service, Washington, DC, Chapter 7.

50 William Shields, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, to Chief, Design Services Division, NCR, NPS, (memo), 28 April 1993.

sign for the cascades and lower plaza.⁵¹ Review of the plan by the National Park Service design staff determined that the proposals would damage the historic fabric of the park.

The Friends of Meridian Hill continued to work with the NPS on ways to improve the park. Together, the National Park Service and Friends discussed several proposals for improvement. These included plans for replacing trees, a lighting scheme, restoring Serenity and other sculptures,⁵² and providing call boxes at several locations within the park.

Another significant step for Meridian Hill Park was its designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1994. The approval was announced at the park by the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, on Earth Day, April 21, 1994. The rationale for Landmark status as presented in the registration form was that "Meridian Hill Park is an outstanding accomplishment of early 20th century Neoclassical design in the United States. Few other parks of its period match its ambitious scale and intent, and few have retained its high level of integrity."

After the park was designated a National Historic Landmark, the National Park Service determined that any additional funds for the park would be used for preserving or restoring historic components of the park by maintaining "its high level of integrity" rather than adding new features.⁵³ In 1994, restoration of the park to its 1936 as-constructed design was estimated at \$7,000,000, the 1990 cost escalated for inflation.⁵⁴

In 1995, Park Police began issuing citations and arresting people found in the park after hours in an attempt to eliminate sexual activity, drug and gang activity. This, coupled with the assignment of two police officers whose sole responsibility was Meridian Hill Park, continued to reduce crime in the park. These officers, who are known by name to frequent park visitors, have gained the trust of the public. The recognition of a trusted authority figure, as well as a uniformed maintenance staff that provides an easily identifiable presence has also caused a reduction in anti-social activity.

Prior to contracting for the Cultural Landscape Report, the National Park Service hired the engineering firm Greenhorne and O'Mara to produce a topographic and utility survey of Meridian Hill Park. The survey, which documents all site features including sub-surface utilities, vegetation, paving, walks and steps, water features, and adjacent roadways, was produced to provide an accurate documentation of existing site conditions and features as well as to serve as a base for the Cultural Landscape Report.

51 Light'n Up, Proposed Lighting Scheme for Meridian Hill Park, February, 1992.

52 Constantine L. Seferlis, Sculptor, to William Shields, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, 18 October 1993. It was estimated that restoring the primary features of Serenity, i.e. nose, lips and hair, would cost about \$7,800.

53 Robert Stanton, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, to Malcolm E. Peabody, Co-Chair and Treasurer, Friends of Meridian Hill, 4 August 1994.

54 *Ibid.*

3. Site Analysis and Evaluation



3.1 Introduction

The following chapter analyzes the existing conditions of the park, in the context of the historical development of the site described in detail in the previous chapter. This analysis is based on the significant, character-defining features of the site as defined in the National Landmark nomination: spatial organization, including land use, views and vistas, and circulation; topography; vegetation; structures, furnishings and objects including the lodge, water features, walls, fences, pavement, benches, lighting, play areas, urns and planters, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, quick couplers, drainage gutters and grates, and sculpture. Each feature is presented with as-built conditions compared to existing conditions, which are analyzed for their integrity.

As indicated in the statement of significance (section 1.2), the period of significance of the site is from 1910 to 1936, from authorization of site acquisition through final construction and planting before its official opening in 1936. Although there continued to be memoranda from Horace Peaslee encouraging further refinement of the park subsequent to 1936 with the Commission of Fine Arts approving various components of these memoranda, no significant changes were made to the design of the park.

Based on the 1936 date of completion and documentary materials available at this time, the as-built condition of the park is illustrated with historical photographs for each character-defining feature. The architectural/structural components are essentially intact as constructed. As-planted plans are provided for the planting portion of this analysis. Changes in the architectural/structural features are described in the text with supporting photographs keyed to existing conditions plans.

3.2 Spatial Organization

Spatial Organization

The highly developed primary spaces of Meridian Hill Park—the mall, the great terrace, the hillside gardens, and the lower plaza—are organized along a main north-south axis. This axis is a visual one with no direct circulation on it. Instead, circulation throughout the park crosses and re-crosses the main axis, providing opportunities to look along it, but physically following a series of richly complex secondary axes and connections between them. These primary spaces are enframed by densely planted edges. The park has two major cross axes, one at the great terrace, the other through the lower plaza.

The upper level of the mall and great terrace are formal in their development. The hillside gardens are bisected by the symmetrically formal cascades with informally planted slopes on either side. The formal cascades connect the formal upper section of the park to the formal lower plaza through a powerful visual link along the north-south axis.

While the two major spaces of the upper park, the mall and the great terrace, and the two major spaces of the lower park, the cascades and the lower plaza, overlap physically, the wall of the great terrace creates a crisply delineated boundary between upper and lower parks. The enframing borders for the entire park contain naturalistic plantings and meandering paths.

Within this conceptually simple organization, shown graphically on plan sheet 14, there is a rich layering of secondary axes and spaces, each with its own character but secondary to the main organization. The Linden Allee, connecting the important 16th Street entrance to the great terrace, is along a distinctive axis paralleling the main park axis. The other park entrances, from 15th and 16th Streets at the upper end of the park, and at Chapin Street, are developed as secondary cross axes. Essentially, all the secondary axes of the park are along circulation paths with carefully developed termini.

The multiplicity of spaces and experiences developed in the limited area of this park is possible because of the intense use of structural elements. Extensive retaining walls create the terraced form of the park: a level upper section, a sloped center, and a lower plaza. The park is literally walled or fenced on all sides, with carefully designed specific entry points. All the structures of the park, including even walks, were constructed of exposed aggregate concrete of varying color, form, pattern and texture to create a series of architectonic rooms reinforced and enhanced by use of vegetation.

There is a constant interplay in the park between hard and soft surfaces, formal and informal areas, the cascading and pooled water, and a variety of vegetation carefully selected to provide contrasting textures, colors, forms, and seasonal interest.

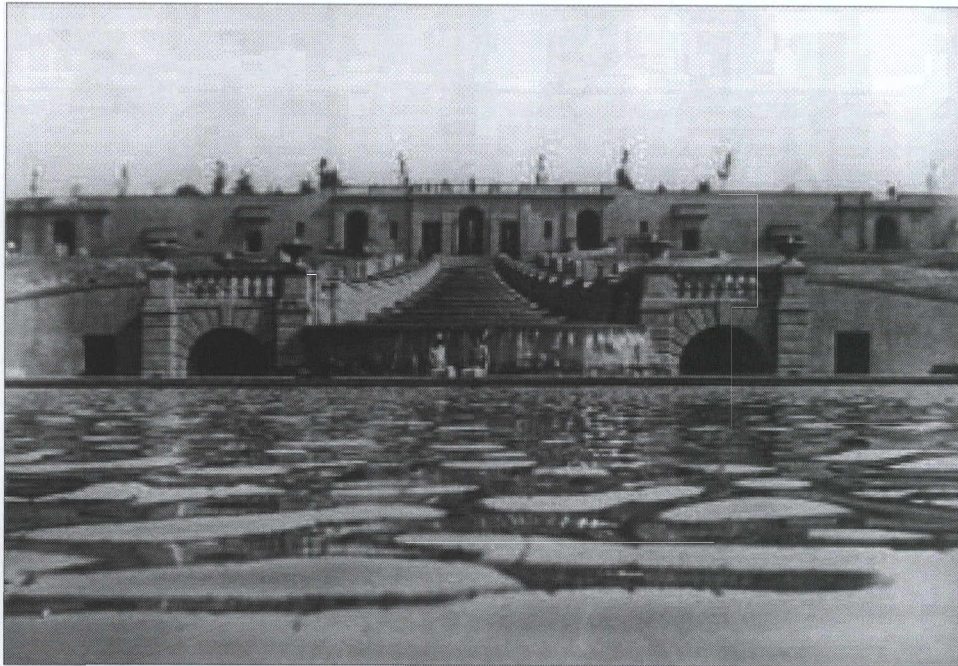


Figure 77: 1936 view from lower plaza to cascades (RCP-CRF, October, 1936).

The spatial organization of the as-built park is essentially intact.

Land Use

The land use of the original park design, including passive recreation such as walking, sitting, talking, reading, picnicking, croquet playing, informal play, sunbathing, and other individual recreational activi-

ties, in addition to concerts and use of the life-size chess board, are unchanged. While early photographs of the park show croquet playing on the mall, jogging is more likely to be seen today.

Views and Vistas

Although the southern view along the main axis has been obstructed by the construction of the apartment building south of the site, the other axial views within the park are largely intact. However, in many cases, the enframing of those views has been compromised or lost. The hedges along the outer edges of the walks along the mall that provided lower enframing to that view have been lost, although the upper enframing created by the oak canopies and other edge planting remains. The east side of the Linden Allee was originally bordered by a hedge, now lost. Vertical evergreens flanking the axis of the view across 16th Street at the 16th Street overlook are gone. The dense evergreen plantings that terminated the view down the axis of the west ascent and across the plaza

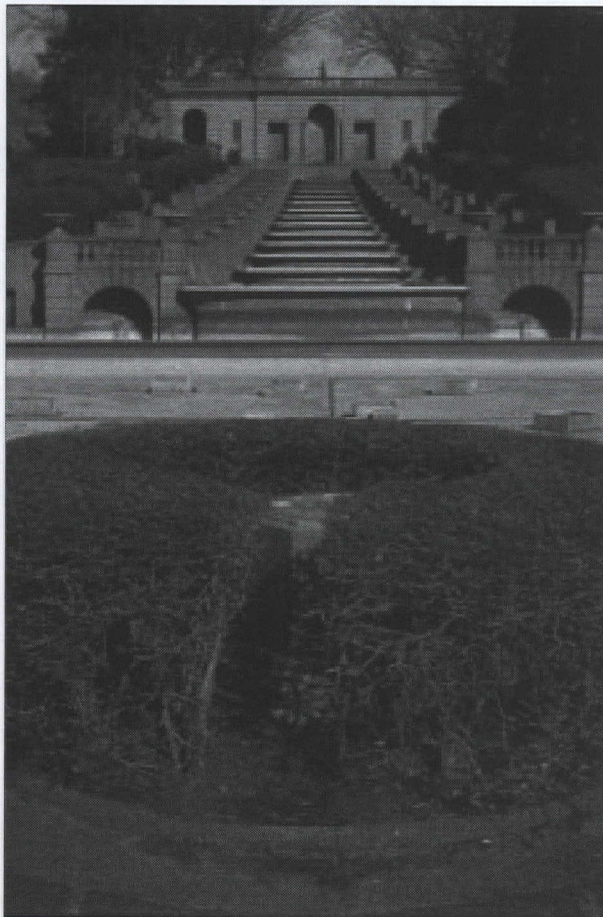
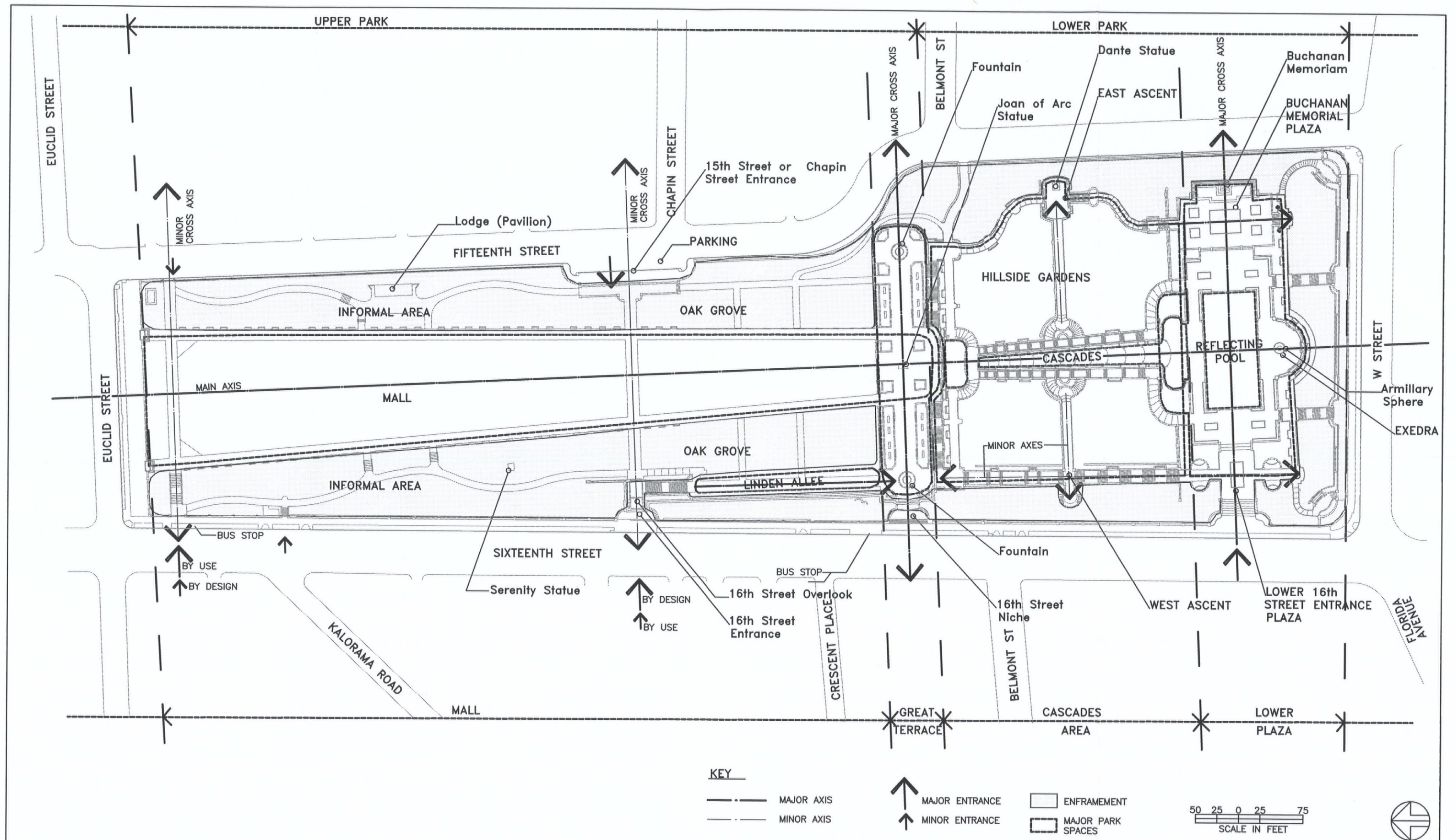


Figure 78: 1997 view from lower plaza to cascades, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

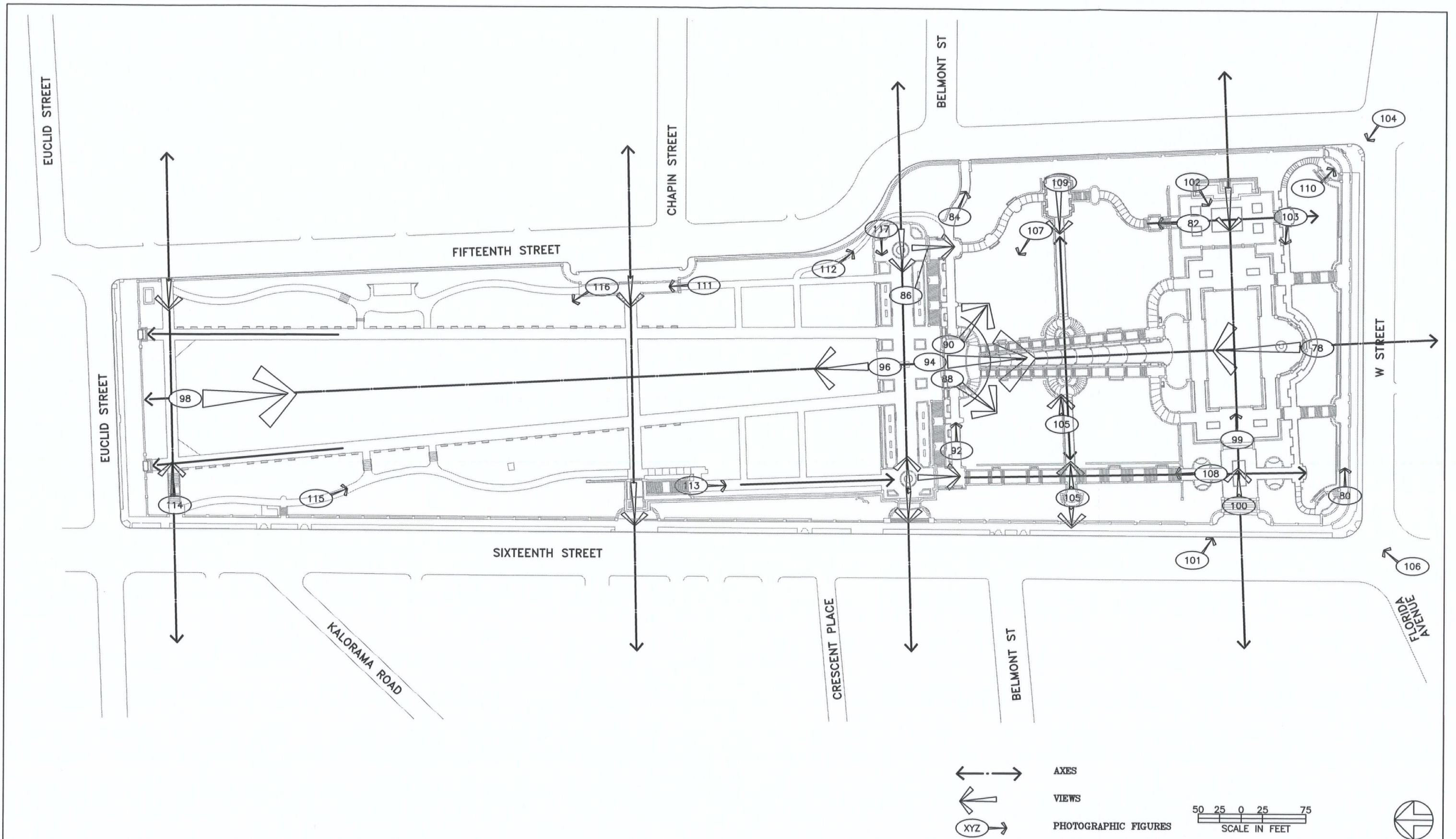
DRAWN BY:
MACS

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 14



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

DATE:
7-1-99

VIEWS AND VISTAS

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Archtrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DRAWN BY:
MACS

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

SHEET 15

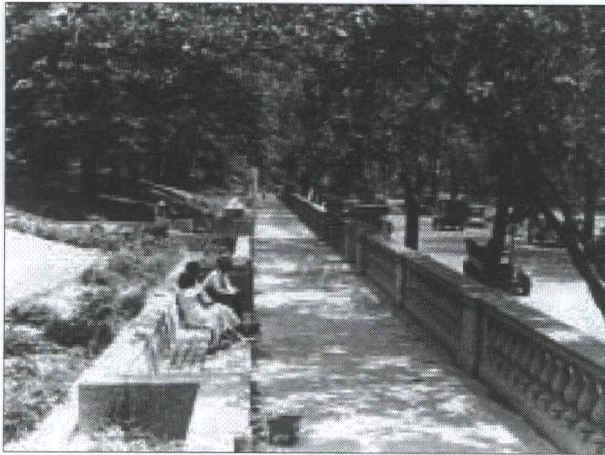


Figure 79: Historic photo circa 1940 looking east along lower walkway parallel to W Street (RCP-CRF, no date).

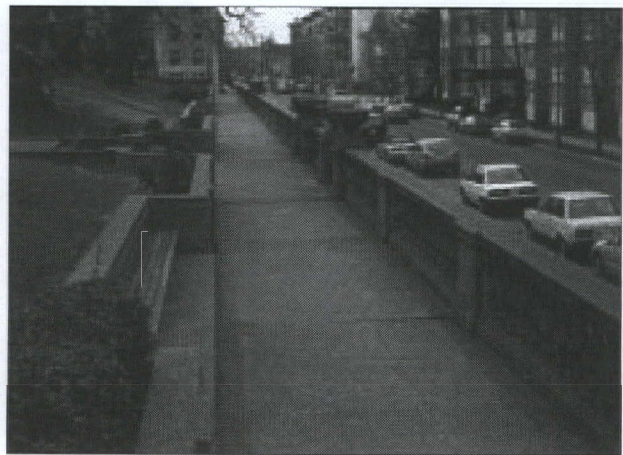


Figure 80: 1997 photo looking east along lower walkway parallel to W Street. Notice the change in character of this area due to the loss of street trees along W Street (Land Ethics, Inc.).

from the base of the cascades are now missing. The meandering east ascent ends at the plaza in front of the Buchanan Memorial, although the axis beginning at the bottom end of the ascent continues across the plaza to a terminus similar to that at the end of the west ascent. This terminus is also missing its dense evergreen plantings.

Circulation

The park's major circulation follows secondary axes. Secondary circulation in the park is within the border areas and either connects axes or follows curvilinear paths in the border areas.

Because the original circulation routes and patterns are intact as designed and as they were at completion of the park in 1936, the major circulation issue facing the park is the overlay of a contemporary requirement: namely access for mobility or perceptually impaired visitors.

The following sections discuss the above spatial organization aspects by areas of the park, as-built and existing conditions.

a. As-Built Conditions

Meridian Hill Park was built on a natural terrace of land within a predominantly residential neighborhood. Bounded by Euclid Street to the north, 16th Street to the west, 15th Street to the east and W Street to the south, the park was designed to be more than just a neighborhood park; it was to provide a unique park experience for all residents of Washington. Although efforts such as those of Mary Henderson were made to change the residential character of the area, by 1936 the park was surrounded almost exclusively by apartment buildings and single family homes.



Figure 81: 1936 view of new plantings along east ascent (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



Figure 82: 1996 view north along east ascent (Land Ethics, Inc.).

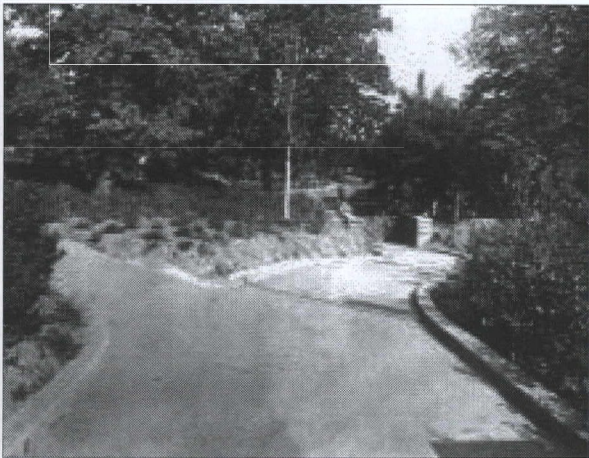


Figure 83: 1936 view down service drive from terrace below great wall toward 15th Street (RCP-CRF, September 21, 1936).

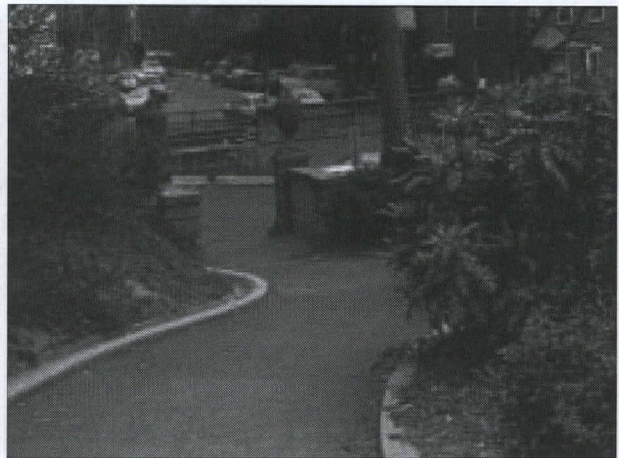


Figure 84: 1997 view down service drive from terrace below great wall toward 15th Street. Notice the loss of the gate across the entrance (Land Ethics, Inc.).

While Meridian Hill Park was designed to function as an integrated whole, it was designed as a series of four sub-areas, or outdoor spaces, that function almost independently of each other. These spaces are the mall, the great terrace, the hillside gardens, and the lower plaza (see Spatial Organization plan sheet 14). In turn, each of these major outdoor spaces can be further subdivided into even smaller functional areas, each of which serves a specific purpose within the context of the larger outdoor space. While each space may serve an individual purpose, they are organized and related by a primary central axis running the length of the park. Secondary cross axes and axes paralleling the main north/south one order the lower plaza, the terrace, the center of the mall from the 16th Street entrance to the 15th Street entrance, and the northern end of the mall (see Views and Vistas plan sheet 15). These strong axes provide the park with a cohesion of design and orientation that is critical to its design success.

A highly ordered, regular organization is imposed on a rather irregular site very successfully. The perceptual experience of the park is of formal and regular axiality. Close examination of the site plan reveals, however, careful adjustment of the regular axial grid to the reality of the site and to the location of the Washington Monument off the centerline of 16th Street by skewing the



Figure 85: 1936 view south along east ascent after planting was completed (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).

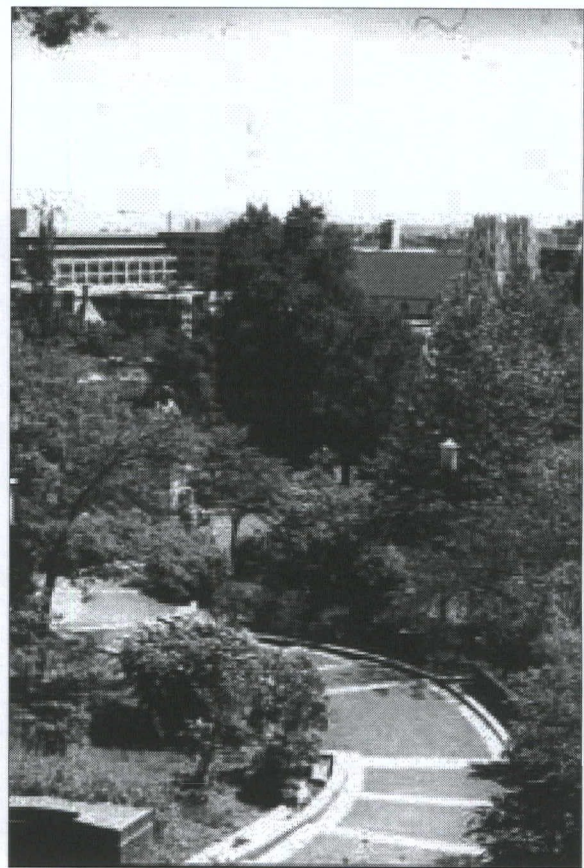


Figure 86: 1996 view south along east ascent (Land Ethics, Inc.).

main north-south axis slightly to the east at its southern end. Also, since the park's northern and southern bounding streets are not parallel to each other, the whole park is organized parallel to Euclid on the north with the discrepancy absorbed by the planting area between the lower plaza and W Street at the southern end of the site. These subtle adjustments allow the park to maintain a Platonic ideal while accommodating reality, a need often found in Washington but rarely so elegantly accomplished as in Meridian Hill Park.

Although these axes defined views through the site, they did not serve the same function in its circulation. Circulation followed a series of interconnected pathways through the site, that at well-defined moments, provided views along the main axis and cross axes forming a cohesive whole of the various rooms of the park. The main entrances to the park were at the southern end of the park into the lower plaza; the main 16th Street entrance, through the covered arch, up a series of steps to the Linden Allee; and from 15th Street at Chapin Street.

The Lower Plaza

The lower plaza was the most formal space of the park and served as its southern terminus; the exedra at the mid-point of the southern border also was the focal terminal point of the major north-south axis of the park. The plaza itself was organized along the cross-axis of the park, run-



Figure 87: 1936 view across hillside gardens looking southwest from great terrace towards Henderson castle (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



Figure 88: 1996 view across hillside gardens looking southwest from great terrace, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

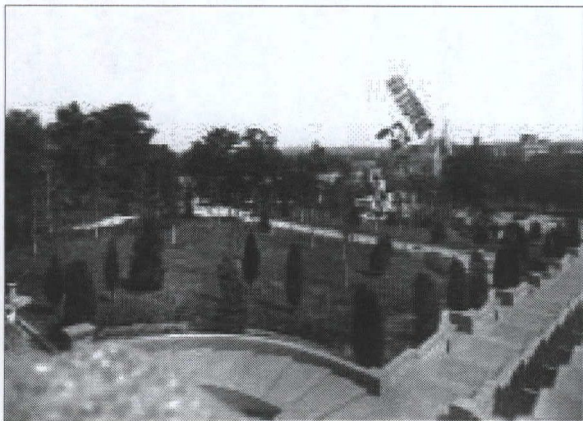


Figure 89: 1936 view southeast across the hillside gardens from great terrace (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).

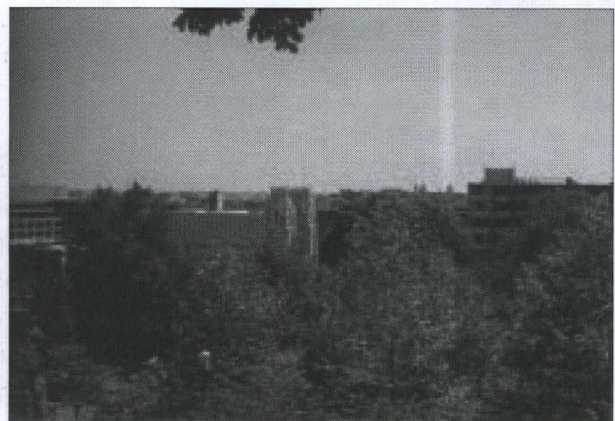


Figure 90: 1997 view southeast across the hillside gardens from great terrace (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 91: 1936 view of west staircase looking east along great wall (RCP-CRF, July 14, 1936).

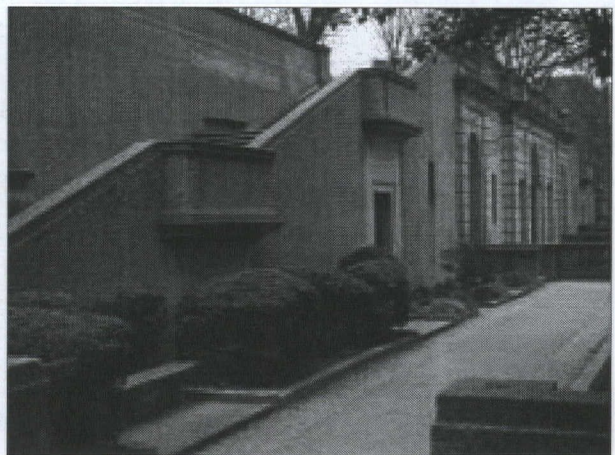


Figure 92: 1997 view of west staircase looking east along great wall (Land Ethics, Inc.).

ning from the 16th Street entrance on the west and terminating at the Buchanan Memorial on the east.

The 16th Street entrance was framed by curved retaining walls fronted by formally-clipped hedges. Broad steps led from 16th Street to a landing area with a grass panel in the center, with walks extending north and south from it on a secondary north-south axis terminated at its south end by a massing of vertical evergreens. These walks were flanked by opposing semicircular sandbox areas. The landing area paving had square panels with polychrome star designs. (Fig. 183)

The most dominant feature of the lower plaza was a central rectilinear reflecting pool with eight fountain jets, surrounded by a broad expanse of exposed aggregate concrete paving. The space around the pool was defined by architectural features: balustrade-topped retaining walls on the south, cascade pools and flanking walls on the north, and low retaining walls on the east and west all reinforced by clipped planting masses of various heights. The design intent was that these planting masses would serve as walls around the lower plaza "room." The earliest planting plan for the lower plaza showed these hedge masses as fourteen feet in height; later this was revised to eight feet. In photos from the 1940's these plantings appear to have reached heights of approximately that.

An armillary sphere was the focal point of the exedra at the south side of the pool.

Steps led from the eastern end of the reflecting pool area up to a terrace in front of the Buchanan Memorial, which terminated the lower plaza east west cross axis. A secondary axis, paralleling the one through the landing area to the west, from the east ascent crosses this terrace terminated at its south end by a massing of vertical evergreens. The defining walls of the memorial were backed by planting masses. Axial views of the memorial from the 16th Street entrance were framed by pairs of trees on both sides of the memorial and four trees around the reflecting pool, one at each corner. These latter trees also helped anchor the space around the reflecting pool. A paved checkerboard was centered between the two trees at the east end of the pool.

Separation from W Street was provided by a grade change as well as dense plantings of trees and shrubs in planting areas south of the plaza and reflecting pool. These areas also included smaller, more intimate spaces for visitors to relax and enjoy the park. For example, a minor entrance off the intersection of W and 16th Streets led up a series of steps to a bench overlooking the intersection. A similar sitting area was designed off the 15th Street corner, and a linear walkway with seating along it was separated from W Street by a balustrade-topped retaining wall (see figure 79). The width of this planting area changes to accommodate the geometric adjustment of the park to the site.

The Hillside Gardens and Cascades

The hillside gardens and cascades encompassed the area of land that sloped south from the great wall to the flat lower plaza, bounded by 15th Street to the east and 16th Street to the west. The primary component of the hillside gardens was the cascades, along the main axis of the park.

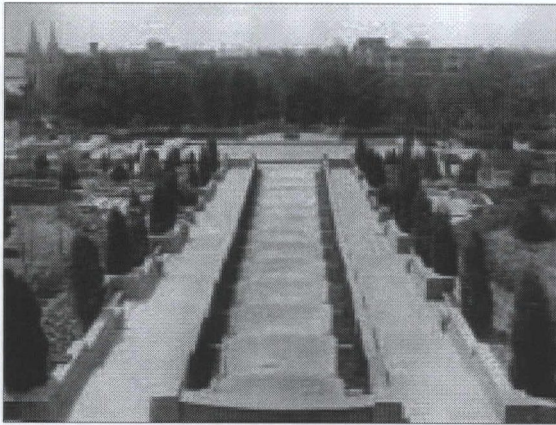


Figure 93: 1936 view south along the cascades. (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).



Figure 94: 1997 view south along the cascades. Note apartment building intruding on the historic view of Washington (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 95: Pre-1936 view north along the mall (RCP-CRF, c. 1940).



Figure 96: 1997 view north along the mall, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

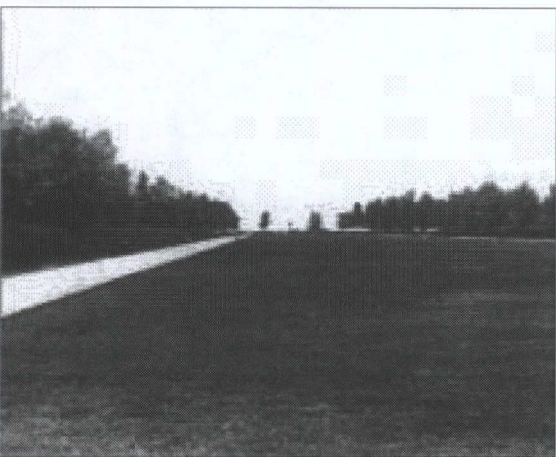


Figure 97: 1936 view south along the mall to the great terrace (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).

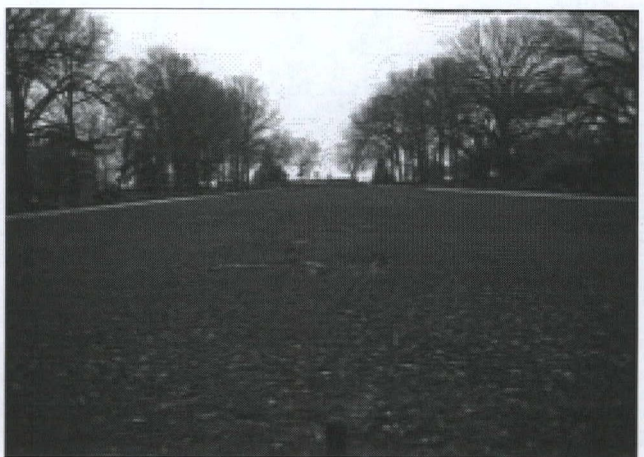


Figure 98: 1997 view south along the mall (Land Ethics, Inc.).

The cascades begin at a pool at the foot of the great wall and continue through thirteen basins to the lower plaza. The design of the cascades and their walkways employed a forced perspective. By progressively widening each basin down the slope, the cascades appeared, from the lower plaza, much longer than they actually were. From the top of the cascades and the great terrace, the cascades appeared uniform in length and width.

Massed plantings in the hillside gardens flanked the cascades. The cascades were enframed by an American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) hedge and regularly spaced specimens of Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), which served as punctuation points along its length. At the mid-point of the cascades were cross axes with focal points at their ends, Dante on the east and an overlook on the west, connecting the east and west ascents to the walks along the cascades.

The east-west cross axis walks and the cascades divided the hillside gardens into four similarly-sized quadrants planted with sycamore groves or boscos, under planted with informal massings of flowering trees, shrubs, and ground cover. The groves were designed to serve as informal woodland areas, to be viewed from the paths, not accessed and used.

On the west and east sides of the hillside gardens, staircases provided access between the lower plaza and the great terrace. The west ascent, paralleling 16th Street, provided both physical and visual access north and south along this axis. The east ascent was curved reflecting the curve of 15th Street along this side of the park (see figure 85). It was designed with smaller and fewer landings than the west ascent, with the Dante statue plaza at its midpoint. This staircase was effectively screened from 15th Street by informal plantings along the 15th Street wall. A service drive from 15th Street to the terrace below the great wall provided access for maintenance vehicles. Wooden gates at 15th street prevented public use of the service drive (see figure 83).

The Great Terrace

The great terrace served as the terminus of the upper mall and the dividing point between the upper and lower parks. The terrace was accessed from the hillside gardens and cascades by staircases leading up to the terrace overlook from the tops of the east and west ascents (see figure 85). Two fountains, one at either end of the terrace, served as the terminal focal points of its visual cross-axis. The terrace overlook provided the only opportunity in the park for views along the main axis of both upper and lower parks. The view to the south extended far past the boundary of the site including the skyline of downtown Washington and the Washington Monument (see figures 87, 89).

The Mall

The mall was the first portion of the park constructed and was opened to the public in 1923. As such, the mall functioned as a park within a park until the completion of the lower plaza in 1930. The mall was bounded by Euclid Street to the north, 16th Street to the west, 15th Street to the east, and the great terrace to the south.

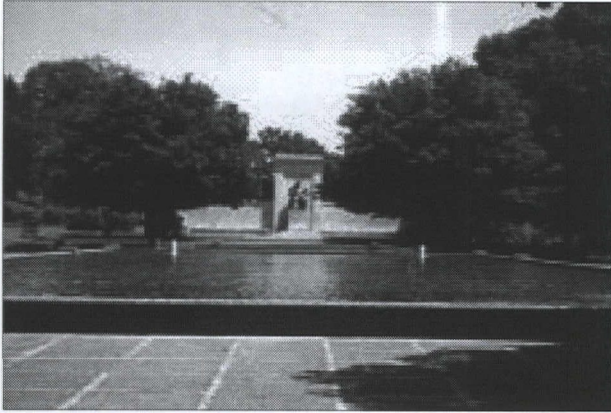


Figure 99: View across lower plaza and reflecting pool to the Buchanan memorial, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 100: View from inside the 16th Street entrance across 16th Street, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 101: View across 16th Street of the entrance to lower plaza, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 102: View across the lower plaza from the Buchanan statue, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 103: Area between the lower plaza and W Street at the 15th Street entrance, looking west to the exedra, 1997. Note the recesses of paving into planting areas intended to receive benches that were never installed. (Land Ethics, Inc.).

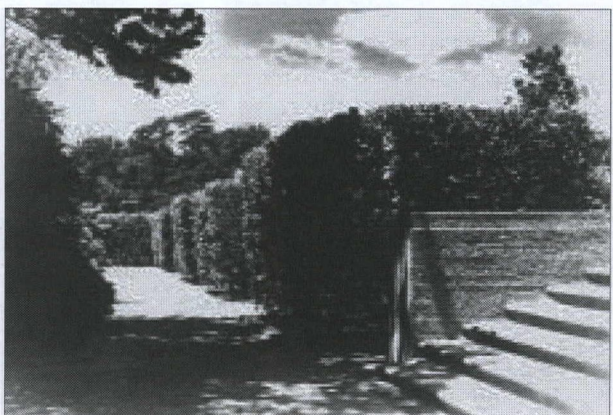


Figure 103a: The same view as in Figure 103, but with the enclosing hedges as designed, (RCP - CRF.).



Figure 104: 15th Street entrance to the lower plaza, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 105: View toward Dante from west ascent, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

The nearly flat¹ trapezoidal grass panel along the central mall axis was framed by walks along its east and west sides, backed by formal and informal plantings. This area was intended for passive recreation and informal play, but not for organized sports.² The space tapered from north to south in a forced perspective. Viewed from the north end of the upper park looking south, or from the wider end looking towards the narrower end, the forced perspective exaggerates the length of the mall, making it appear longer than it is. Viewed from the south end looking north, the forced perspective tricks the eye, effectively making the mall area appear uniform in width down its entire length, instead of tapering into the distance.

The forced perspective of the converging walks along the east and west sides of the grass panel was heightened and enhanced by the planting bordering the walkways on the outside of the grassed mall. Along the walkways were hedges of Canadian Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), clipped to approximately six feet in height, which ran from the Euclid Street entrances to just past the 15th and 16th Street entrances respectively (see figure 97). These hedges were backed by rows of White Oak (*Quercus alba*) that provided shade for benches along the walkways in front of the hedges. The border areas between the hedges and oaks along the mall and the walls along 15th and 16th Streets contained winding paths and informal plantings of trees, shrubs and groundcover.

South of the Chapin Street cross-axis between 15th Street and 16th Street, the converging mall walks were flanked not by clipped hedges, but by groves of White

- 1 The mall actually slopes up six and a half feet from its northern end to the great terrace.
- 2 U. S. Grant, III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, to Alice Hutchins Drake, 1410 Girard Street, Washington, D. C., 10 June 1932.

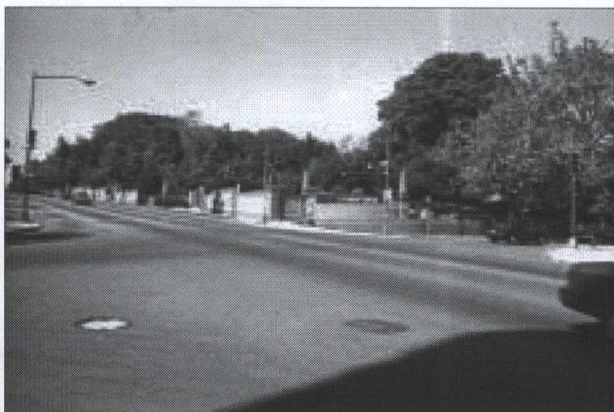


Figure 106: View from the intersection of W Street and 16th Street toward the entrance to the lower plaza, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

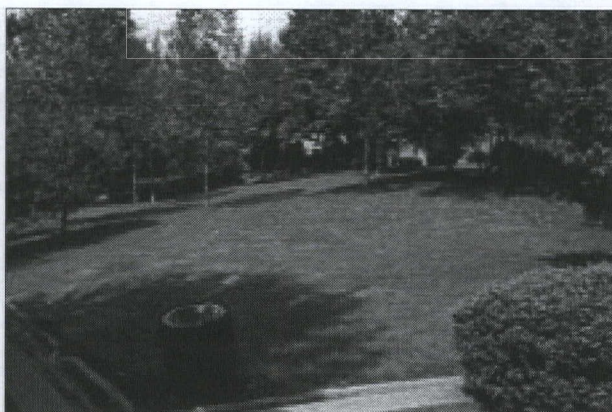


Figure 107: 1996 view from Dante northwest across hillside gardens (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 108: View north up the west ascent from the lower plaza, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

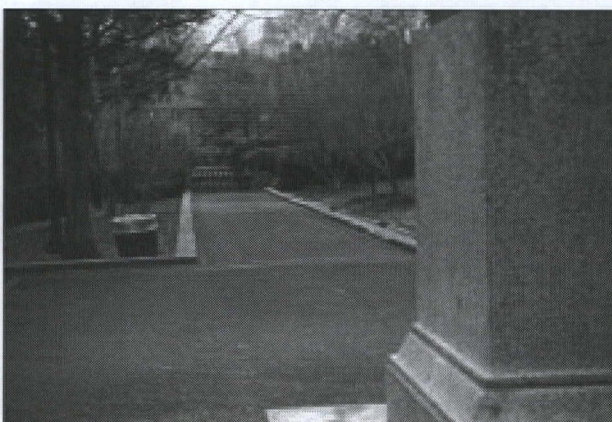


Figure 109: 1997 view west from Dante across cascades, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 110: View southeast toward the 15th Street entrance to the lower plaza, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

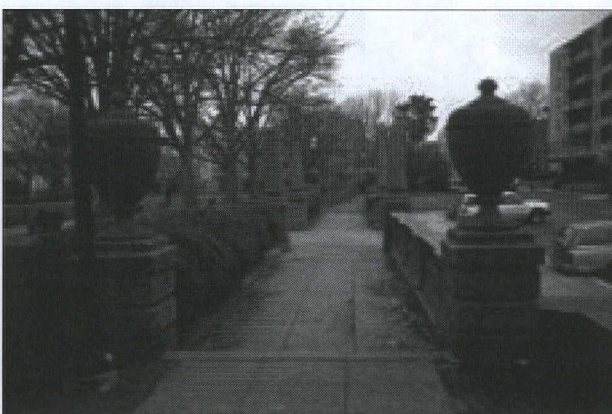


Figure 111: 1997 view north across 15th Street entrance, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Oaks (*Quercus alba*) that continue the strong definition between the large, flat, open space of the mall and the flanking planting areas. On the 16th Street side of the oak grove, an allee of lindens extended south from the main 16th Street entrance to the west end of the great terrace. The lindens, planted in regularly-spaced rows on both sides of a straight walkway, were originally intended to be pleached into an arch over the walk between them, but there is no indication that the trees were ever clipped.

On the 15th Street side of the oak grove, a similar walkway extended from the 15th Street entrance to the east end of the great terrace, but the plantings along it were informally massed.

Although circulation did not follow the main visual axis of the park, down the center of the mall, it did follow the walks along the mall and secondary cross axes. These cross axes also provided critical visual corridors through the park and along the walkways across the mall area: at the northern end of the park, with entrances from 16th Street and 15th Street; between the main 16th Street entrance and the 15th Street/Chapin Street entrance; and along the great terrace.

Along the northern end of the park was a tall ornamental iron fence supported by exposed aggregate concrete piers and bases. Exposed aggregate concrete niches within the fence served as northern termini for the walkways on the east and west sides of the mall. A small children's play area with a sand box in the northeast corner was bordered by a low iron fence and clipped hedge.

b. Existing Conditions

The boundaries of Meridian Hill Park have not changed since completion of the acquisition of the site in 1912 and the neighborhood around it remains residential, mostly apartment buildings and single family homes.

While the park has retained the integrity of its 1936 as-built spatial organization, primary views, and circulation patterns with only minor alterations, views from the park have been compromised by the construction of two apartment buildings that block views to the south. Growth of shade trees has helped realize the original design intent by reinforcing spatial qualities and most dead or damaged trees have been replaced in kind to enhance this. Some spatial reinforcement has been lost by not replacing high hedges and other enframing plantings.

The Lower Plaza

Changes in the spatial character, views and circulation of the lower plaza have been confined to the views and vistas, and the quality of the spatial enclosure. The entrance from 16th Street continues to serve as the major access point to the lower plaza through the lower park (see figures 99, 100 and 101). The spatial quality of this area as an enclosed room has been lost due to loss of enframing plant materials, mainly the formal, clipped American Hornbeam hedges, which used to surround the lower plaza. The loss of informal plantings between the plaza and W Street and in the hillside gardens has also caused the lower plaza to feel much more open and exposed than it did after construction (see figures 102 and 103).



Figure 112: 1997 view of walk along 15th Street below east end of the great terrace, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 113: 1996 view along linden alley looking south to the great terrace. Note the benches missing from both sides of the alley (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 114: 1997 view along the north cross axis of the park between 15th and 16th Streets. Note triangular paving insert in corner and posts and chains installed to control traffic. (Land Ethics, Inc.).

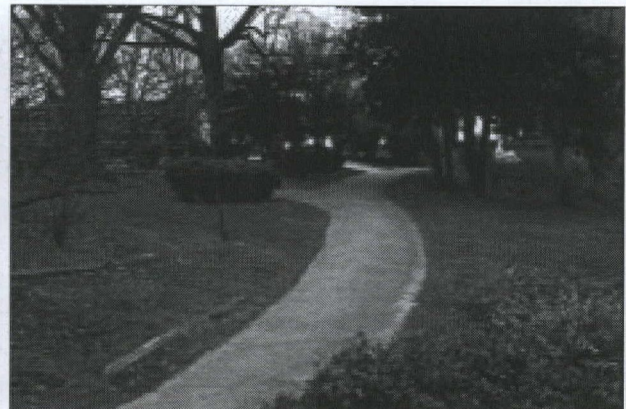


Figure 115: 1997 view south along walkway, through informal area along 16th Street side of the mall, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 116: 1997 view north from the 15th Street entrance, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

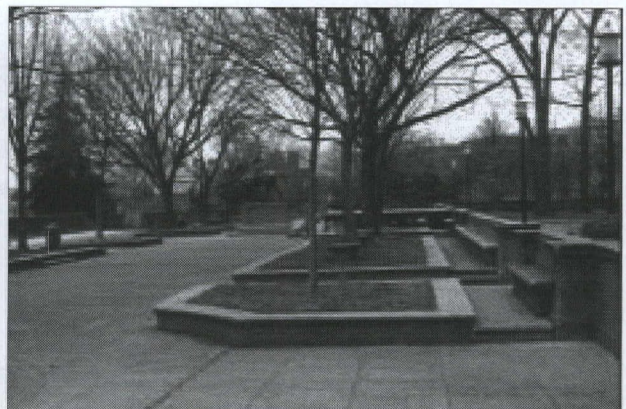


Figure 117: 1997 view west across great terrace from near the 15th Street fountain, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Another area of significant change has been along W Street, where the loss of street trees has caused this area to be much more open and exposed than after completion in 1936 (see figure 80).

Entrances to the park from the corners of 16th and W and 15th and W Streets (see figures 104, 106, and 110) have retained their form and character with the exception of the loss of enframing plant materials.

The Hillside Gardens and Cascades

The hillside gardens and cascades have generally retained their spatial quality and character. Only three of the original sycamores planted in the hillside gardens have survived. The rest have been replaced with a disease-resistant improved variety, which will take time to mature. The English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) originally planted as a ground cover under the sycamores has been replaced by grass. Thus, these areas have changed subtly in circulation and use, from areas that visitors merely looked into, to areas that they can access and move through (see figure 107).

The hillside ascents to the west (see figure 108) and east (see figure 82) have retained their use as secondary circulation routes, connected to the east-west pathways that join the ascents to the cascades (see figures 105 and 109). Again, changes to the spatial quality in these areas are primarily due to the loss of enframing plantings on either side of the walkways.

The hillside gardens, while occupying a sizable area of the park, have only one entrance from the surrounding streets. This entrance, from 15th Street across from Belmont Street, was historically a service driveway but now receives some pedestrian traffic. Because there is only one outside entrance, visitors gain access to the hillside gardens down the stairs from the great terrace or by one of several paths from the lower plaza. Circulation in the hillside gardens centers on the cascades, a focal feature visible from all directions.

The Great Terrace

Access to the great terrace has continued to be from the east and west staircases from the hillside gardens (see figure 92), through the linden allee from the 16th Street entrance (see figure 113), or directly from the mall. The major changes to this area of the park have not occurred to the spatial organization or circulation, but to the commanding view of Washington to the south. The views (see figures 86, 88, 90, and 94), which were historically more expansive and included the Capitol and the Washington Monument, were blocked by the construction of the Meridian Towers apartment building south of the park in 1964.

The Mall

The view along the main park axis to the north has changed due to the construction of an apartment building to the north of the park off Euclid Street (see figure 96). While historically the view was of a varied skyline, it is now commanded and overshadowed by the apartment complex.

The circulation patterns and spatial quality of the mall have changed little since 1936, except to reflect an increasing enclosure due to the maturity of the oaks on either side of the mall. At ground level, however, much of the spatial enclosure no longer exists due to the loss of the formal, clipped hedges that lined both sides of the mall behind the rows of benches.

A secondary circulation and vegetation issue has to do with the wearing of informal paths across the grass panels of the mall and the tendency of service vehicles to drive on the grass panels, both damaging the grass and often breaking quick couplers. Dirt paths have also been worn between the informal walks and the main mall walks in various locations. The park has attempted to discourage the pedestrian path across the mall with posts and chains, with little success, although the posts appear to have discouraged the service vehicles. In addition, at the north end of the mall, triangular paving sections and more posts and chains have been added, responding to the tendency to cut across corners (see figure 114).

The circulation of the mall has changed only in one major respect. While the main 16th Street entrance was designed as the primary, formal entrance to the mall from the 16th Street side of the park, today it has become less inviting due to security issues. The blind corner enclosed within the entrance causes it to be dark and a potentially hazardous location for park visitors. Thus the entrances slightly to the north have replaced the main 16th Street entrance as the major access points to the mall off 16th Street (see figure 114). To the east, the 15th and Chapin Street entrance remains an important access point to the site (see figure 115).

To a great degree, the informal gardens to the east and west of the mall have retained their character and spatial quality although many shrub masses are missing. The curvilinear pathways are still bordered by informal tree and shrub massings, contrasting with the formal mall promenades (see figures 111 and 116).

Accessibility Evaluation

Universal access describes the need to provide for enjoyment of public property by everyone, from children in strollers, to toddlers, to grandparents, to the wheelchair bound and otherwise mobility impaired, to persons with grasping, visual, and hearing impediments, to fully-abled visitors. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates access for the disabled and includes the highly specific range of detailed provisions that are to be made to provide access. The National Park Service and the National Forest Service have developed guidelines for providing access to public landscapes. The Federal Government has developed their own standards, called the *Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard* (UFAS). These guidelines, with ADA requirements, should be used to develop a comprehensive plan to provide as complete access to the park as is practical and consistent with the historic fabric of this National Historic Landmark site.

A detailed accessibility survey of Meridian Hill Park has not been done and is not included in the scope of this project. However, architrave p.c. architects has done a preliminary overview survey of the site to identify major areas of concern, opportunities, and substantial difficulties.

Access for People in Wheelchairs

The curvilinear walk from the Sixteenth Street entrance at the northern edge of the park was resurfaced and re-graded to eliminate a stepped ramp as described on 1982 construction drawings. It now provides access to the upper park for persons traveling by public transportation or on adjacent sidewalks. This path is crowned so that the slope down from each side of the crown exceeds the allowable cross slope; however, because it is a crown and not strictly a cross-slope, it may be acceptable.

This entrance provides access to all the design features of the upper park including the mall, the pavilion, the great terrace and overlook, the linden allee, as well as some of the walks in the less formal borders.

Once a wheelchair-using visitor is on the site, a number of other provisions need to be made including an accessible drinking fountain, accessible toilets (if public toilets are provided), signage, and access to the view of the cascades from the overlook.

Access at the Fifteenth Street entrance just south of Euclid Street is possible but not desirable because there is no sidewalk on Fifteenth Street and that entrance is used by Park Police and maintenance vehicles.³

Providing access at the Fifteenth and Chapin Street entrance is possible but would require several interventions: a designated parking space, a curb cut, and a ramp. The parking space and curb cut would be relatively easy to achieve, but adding a ramp up the steps would have a negative impact on the historic fabric.

Access to the view of the cascades from the great terrace is possible for people in wheelchairs through the open, balustraded rail.

Access to the area at the top of the cascades below the great terrace is not practically achievable. It could be barely possible to create a 1:12 handrailed ramp from the mall north of the great terrace around the end of the great terrace on the east side. This would provide access to the east side of the walk in front of the great wall. Such a ramp would require considerable modification to original grading, including substantial changes where the path intersects the old service drive; would be a significant presence because of the many feet of continuous handrail required at a ramp of 1:12; and would result in access to a very limited area. Such a modification would also have an unacceptable negative impact on the integrity of the site.

3 While this entrance has significant disadvantages as an accessible entrance, it also has the advantage of the possibility of a designated parking space. Parking along Fifteenth Street is restricted to diplomats only, beginning at almost thirty feet south on Fifteenth from the southern post at this entrance. A designated handicapped parking space could be provided within that thirty feet. However, because Fifteenth is one-way, the space would be on the left side of the street, possibly limiting its utility for people with mobility aids driving their own cars.

The apron from the street slopes up, then the sidewalk slopes down. Access for wheelchairs could be improved by flattening this hump.

Access to the lower park would also entail significant interventions. A ramped entrance could be cut through the retaining wall from Sixteenth Street above the current Sixteenth Street entrance, but would have a major impact on historic fabric (the retaining wall) and would involve massive re-grading. Such an entrance may, however, be rather low-profile in appearance, even as it has substantial impact on the historic grades and wall. Another approach to access to the lower park is to begin a ramped structure up Sixteenth Street to run level into the park, above the steps at that entrance. Another ramp or sloped sidewalk would be required to get up the sixteen and a half inches at the three steps leading directly into the lower plaza.

Access for Those Using Mobility Aids

Universal access includes a much larger population than those in wheelchairs, including persons using canes, crutches, walkers, or other mobility aids. In highly simplified terms, for the purpose of this overview, many of the access provisions for this population boil down to requirements for stair nosings and handrails. Many of the step profiles at Meridian Hill Park have simple vertical, slightly raked, or formed profiles that meet the requirements for access. However, some of the step profiles at the park are beautifully articulated bullnose profiles, which may not meet the requirement. Two approaches are possible. First, a path at each stair case with the bullnose profiles could be created by the insertion of a wedge-shaped piece to meet the access requirement. The other approach is to consider that people using mobility aids would follow the wheelchair accessible paths.

Because none of the stairs in this many-leveled park has handrails, the addition of handrails would be a major change to the character of the park and needs careful consideration.

Access for Those with Perceptual Impairments

Provisions for those with sight, hearing, and other perceptual problems will largely have to be made as part of the interpretation and signage program developed by the park, but must not be neglected.

3.3 Topography

“Located above Florida Avenue just beyond the boundary of the L’Enfant City at the terminal moraine where the coastal plain gives way to the piedmont hills, the park rises about 60’ in elevation from south to north.... A high retaining wall divides the mall and promenade with its fine views of the city from the changing levels below, where the activity of the fountains and the cascade is resolved in the quiet pools at the southern end of the park.”¹

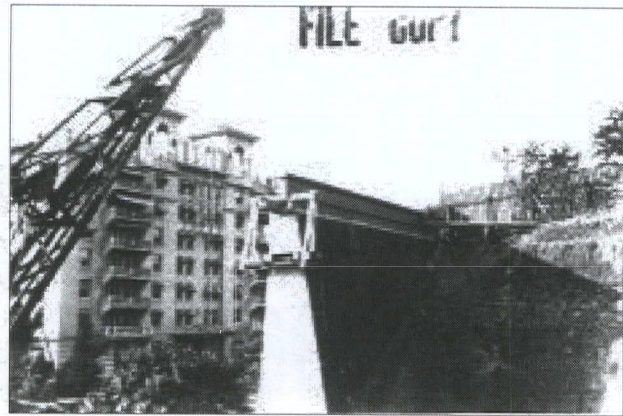


Figure 118: Great Wall during construction, showing extreme change in topography, (NCR-CRF, c. 1929).

a. As Built:

Although the topography of the site lent itself to the development of a hill garden, it was necessary to re-grade the entire site in order to emphasize the topography and create the flat mall, (which actually slopes gently *up* six and a half feet to the overlook at the great terrace); the seventeen foot vertical drop to the top of the cascades, the regular slope of the hillside garden (which drops forty feet); the flat lower terrace; and finally the drop of nineteen feet to W Street. There is virtually no part of the site perimeter that is not higher than the surrounding streets except the upper north-west corner. The creation of this ideal landscape of flat areas and carefully controlled vertical changes required extensive use of retaining walls.²

b. Existing Conditions:

The topography, as created during construction of the park from 1915 to 1936, is fully intact today (see Topography plan sheet 17). It has not been modified or altered since completion of the park in 1936, and continues to convey the original design intent of the park.

Although the as-constructed topography is essentially intact, there have been changes in specific areas due to settlement. During construction tens of thousands of cubic yards of earth were

1 HABS, p.4.

2 In an article “Landscape Construction Notes XXXIII: Notes on the Concrete Work of Meridian Hill Park, Washington.” in *Landscape Quarterly*, Horace Peaslee said of the site “The character of the topography suggested its development in the manner of an Italian garden: the high levels being emphasized by retaining walls for promenades overlooking the city and the distant hills.” p. 31.

moved within the site to create the terrace areas and fill behind retaining walls. Most of the filled areas between or behind the longest sections of retaining walls were planted -- including along 16th Street, portions of 15th Street and W Street -- so that, if settlement occurred, it is not apparent or of structural concern. This is not the case, however, in several sections of the park where paving over the fill abuts retaining walls or other structural elements. Specifically, at the great terrace, the lower plaza at the southeast corner of the reflecting pool, and at the repaired 16th Street retaining wall, settlement has occurred or may be continuing to occur that could cause structural damage.

At the 16th Street retaining wall along the Linden Allee:

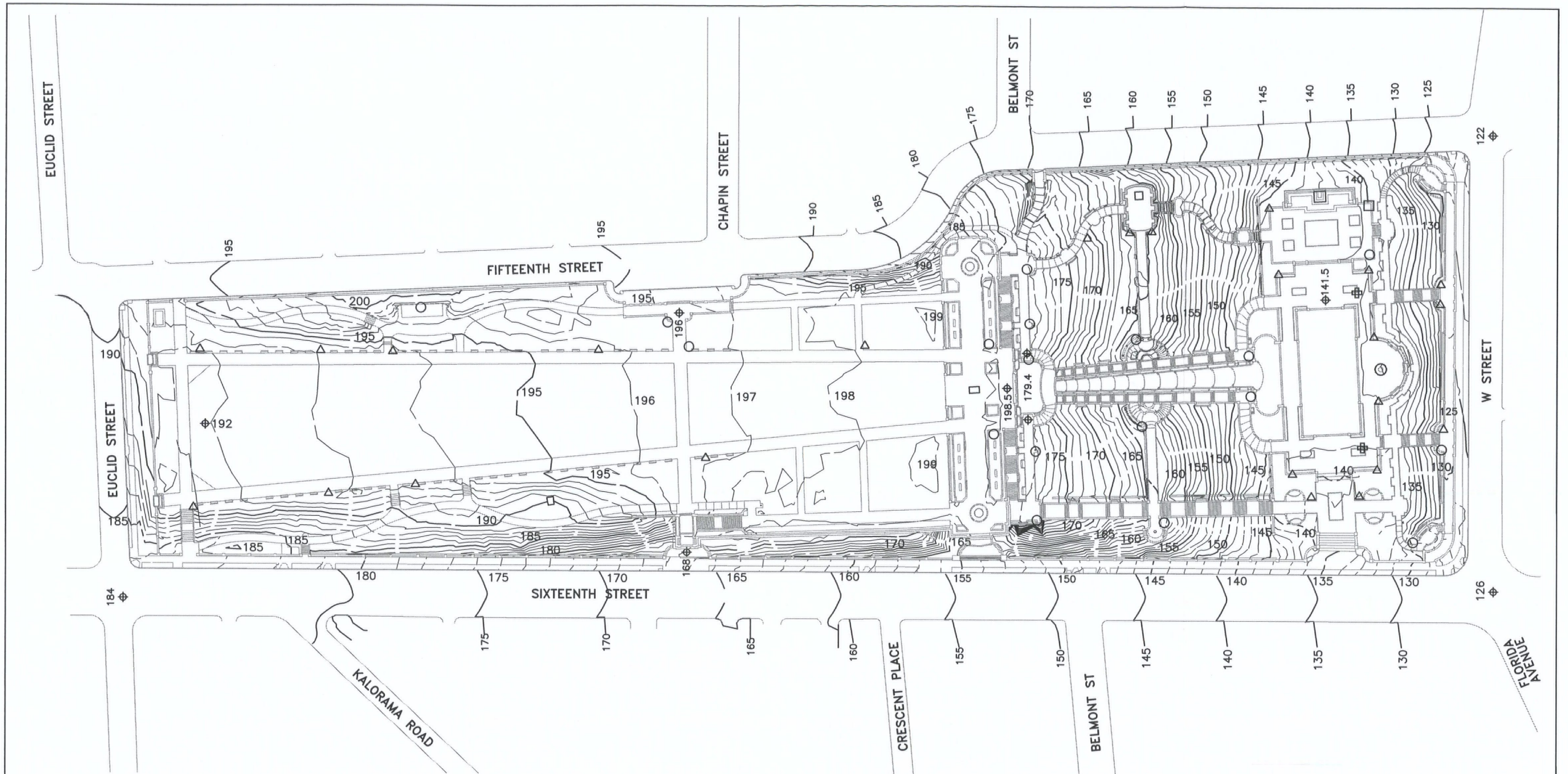
In 1982 a major project was undertaken to stabilize this wall by installing additional deadman ties from the back of the wall under the linden allee. It appears that either movement is still continuing at the southernmost end of this wall where it meets the great terrace, or that it is a section not repaired in the 1982 contract (see figures 169 and 174). Because the exposed aggregate concrete panels are separately cast and mounted on the face of the structural retaining wall, this apparent movement could result in a catastrophic failure of attachment between the two. These areas should be examined and monitored for causes and remedies.

At the Great Terrace:

Settlement of paving behind the nearly twenty foot tall great wall that creates the edge of the great terrace has been a long term problem. Peaslee correspondence in the 1930's cites his concern about settlement in this area and there are drawings from 1945 for the "Restoration of Paved Area on Grand Terrace." (RG 41.1-97) In at least two paving repair and replacement projects, the approach taken was to use sloping sections of new paving to make the transition between the seriously settled areas of the great terrace and the stable areas above the storage areas under the stairs. Sections of paving replaced in the 1970's and '80's and installed in transition slopes between settled areas and stable areas have deteriorated, but no additional settlement is apparent. Some of the raised curb walls around tree planting areas at the west end of the terrace have settled so much that they are actually tilted, conveying an impression of forced perspective. In every case, it should be determined whether the settlement is progressive. If progressive, causes must be determined and strategies developed to deal with the causes. If stable, a repair method should be developed to return the great terrace plaza to level, with slopes only for drainage. Dealing with the tilted panels of paving is particularly relevant for universal access.

At the Lower Plaza:

There has been localized settlement of the southeast corner of the reflecting pool. As a result, the water of the pool sloshes over the edge. There may be additional water leakage at the rim of the pool in this location, since water is coming through several electrical boxes at the former locations of recessed lights.



50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

DATE:
7-1-99

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Archtrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by: Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DRAWN BY:
MACS

TOPOGRAPHY

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 17

3.4 Vegetation

Although Meridian Hill Park is an extraordinary historic resource for its craftsmanship and the integrity of its built elements, the vegetation has less integrity. For example, the various designs for different areas incorporated extensive use of planting masses and hedges to reinforce the definition of outdoor spaces within the structural framework of the built elements, but that definition has been severely diminished by the loss of many plantings. This loss was variously due to changing environmental conditions, such as air pollution, global warming, soil compaction and disease; lack of maintenance or improper pruning; vandalism and the lack of a regular replacement program.

One of the primary reasons for the decline of the planting was the lack of adequate funding for maintenance. Extensive plantings were installed, but the funds allocated for maintenance were insufficient to care for them properly. By World War II, funding was critically low. By the middle of the 1940s, many of the plants had died due to disease and insufficient watering. Many were crowded out by other plants because of too close spacing, and others were damaged by vandalism. It is not known how much material died or was damaged and removed, but as early as 1939, Peaslee repeatedly requested more maintenance funds and supervision to protect the plant investment. At this formative time in the plan's realization, plants that were lost were not replaced to ensure the integrity of the design. Some replacements were made, but often with plants that were different from those on the planting plans.

In later years, management chose to remove and not replace some plant material in order to open views and increase the perception of safety in the park. In addition, the plants left were often improperly pruned, thus destroying their intended design effect.

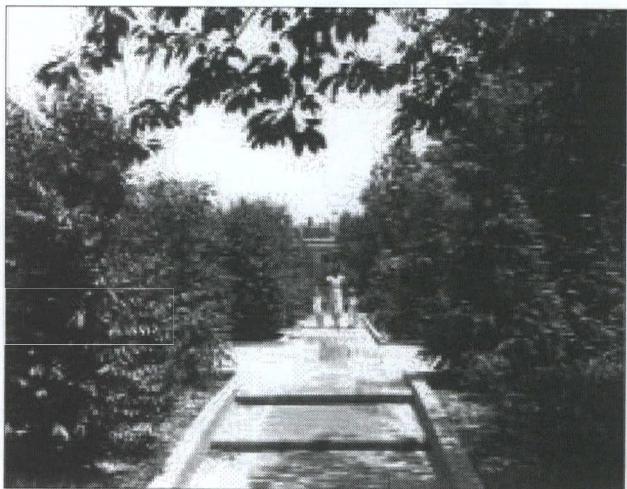


Figure 119: American Hornbeam hedges between lower plaza and W Street, exedra in background (RCP-CRF, c.1945).

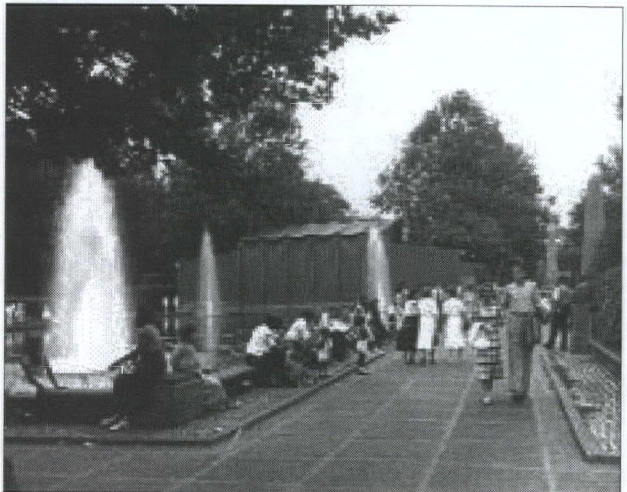


Figure 120: View east of reflecting pool, with exedra to the right. Note the granite sets in the former boxwood planting beds to the left around the pool and to the right (RCP-CRF, c. 1945).

The result of such management practices to date is that the trees have generally survived better than the hedges and shrub masses, and only isolated clumps of groundcover and no vines remain. Plan sheets 18-21 document 1936 as-planted plant materials, and 1936 as-planted plants still existing are so indicated on plan sheet 22, which shows existing planting. Note that, other than trees, only the American holly (*Ilex opaca*) hedges along the cascades and west ascent from 1936 are still present, since other historic kinds of shrubs that still remain are located either singly or in small clusters, and are generally overgrown or in poor condition.

Plant material replacement in accordance with the historic plans started in the 1970s, but was phased as funds were available. Although initial plantings included both trees and shrubs, succeeding replacements were limited to deciduous shade and flowering and evergreen trees, because shrub plantings did not survive due to changed environmental conditions, inadequate or improper maintenance and vandalism. This practice of limiting replacements to trees has continued to recent years. Any future replacement plantings will be done in accordance with planting plans prepared on the basis of this CLR.

Because the evolution of the 1936 as-planted plantings has been extensively described in Section 2 - History of the Park and their as-built and existing contributions to the spatial organization of the park have been described elsewhere in this section, the as-built and existing conditions of vegetation will not be separately described. Instead, the following descriptions compare the integrity of the existing versus the as-planted 1936 plantings on an area-by-area basis.

The Lower Plaza (Compare plan sheets 18 and 23)

The lower plaza plantings have changed significantly. Except for the mature trees located between W Street and the south edge of the plaza, most of the historic plantings either are missing or have been replaced by a different kind or species of plant than as-planted in 1936.

The most significant change is the loss of the formally-clipped masses of American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) that used to enclose all levels of the plaza, except in front of the cascades. Replacement plantings of columnar buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula* 'Columnaris') were installed in the 1970s in an attempt to replicate the original sense of enclosure with lower-growing plants of a similar character that would require less intensive pruning, but these proved too difficult to maintain and these planting beds are now grassed. As a result, the lower plaza is now entirely open, rather than being a series of planting-enclosed rooms.

Another change was the loss of the masses of Canadian hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) that served as a backdrop for the Buchanan Memorial and as southern termini of the axes along the east and west ascents. The Canadian hemlocks behind the Buchanan Memorial were replaced with Carolina hemlocks (*Tsuga caroliniana*), which are more pollution tolerant, but only a few of these have survived. Likewise, few original shrubs remain in the border areas between the back of the Buchanan Memorial and 15th Street, and the southern edge of the plaza and W Street, areas once solidly planted with shrubs and groundcover that are now mostly grassed.

In 1936, sycamores (*Platanus orientalis*) underplanted with clipped masses of American hornbeam had been installed in the four tree wells at each corner of the reflecting pool and in the four tree wells in the Buchanan Memorial plaza (see figure 56). In the 1970's, these missing trees

were replaced with Japanese zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*), on the basis of a 1929 planting plan that showed American elms (*Ulmus americana*) around the reflecting pool, not knowing at that time that the ailing elms had been replaced by the sycamores by 1936. Although the Japanese zelkovas were an acceptable substitute for the disease-prone American elms and are now thriving, they have a completely different character and form than the historically significant sycamores. For example, the zelkovas have an upright, vase-shaped form and small elm-like leaves, while sycamores have a broad, loose form, large coarse leaves, and pendulous, ball-like fruit. Likewise, grass has replaced the “boxed” masses of American Hornbeam that were planted around the sycamores.

The sense of enclosure of the lower plaza has been further diminished by the loss of both the street trees along W Street and the European lindens (*Tilia europaea*), present apparently when the site was acquired, along the southern border of the park that were incorporated in its design. Only one sycamore remains as a street tree, and only three European lindens remain. European lindens are commercially unavailable, but the National Park Service made a conscious decision that it is more important to replace them in-kind than use a substitute for immediate effect. Consequently, basal cuttings from a recently-removed hazardous tree are being grown at the NPS Daingerfield nursery for use as genetically-appropriate replacements.

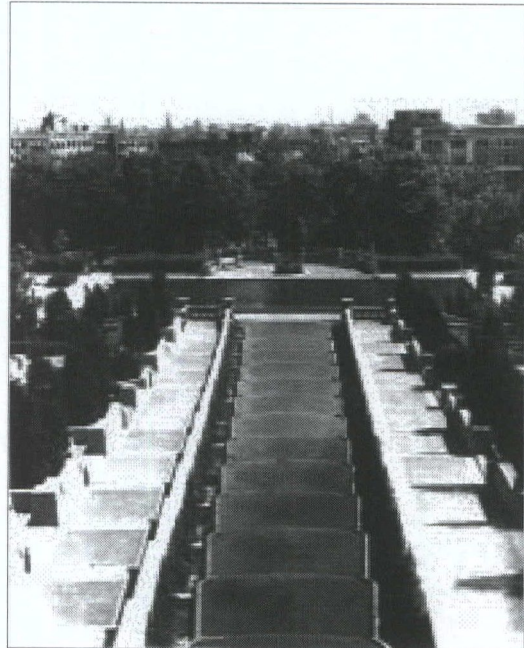


Figure 122: View of cascades showing English Ivy growing along cascades walls (RCP-CRF, c. 1936-1944).

Hillside Gardens and Cascades (Compare plan sheets 18 and 19 with plan sheets 23 and 24)

In the hillside gardens, the plantings along the cascades and west ascent have the greatest integrity, since the American holly hedges flanking them are original, although a small section requires infill planting and the hedges need to be pruned to have flat tops and sides. The Eastern red cedars planted singly at regular intervals in front of the hedges along both sides of the cascades and in flanking masses at the top and bottom of the cascades have integrity of location, while not the original plants. Because of disease, breakage, and overgrowth, these red cedars have been replaced several times since 1936. The latest replacement in 1997 was with an improved variety, Emerald Sentinel red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana* ‘Emerald Sentinel’), more insect and disease resistant and less susceptible to splitting and wind damage than the original plants.

The small planting pockets directly adjacent to the cascade basins now contain verdant masses of yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudocorus*), a perennial commonly found growing in wet roadside ditches and ponds. There was indication in correspondence that Horace Peaslee was considering using these to replace some of the early plants installed that could not tolerate the hot wet condition of these planting areas, but there is no record they were planted. For example, early-proposed shade-loving plants such as hostas and ferns were variously replaced with junipers, different varieties of cultivated iris and daylilies during the period of construction.

Areas of the hillside gardens that have changed the most in character over the years are the four quadrants bordering the cascades. Historically, these areas contained canopied groves of sycamores, anchored at the edges by informal massings of Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) and understory plantings of white and pink flowering dogwoods (*Cornus florida* and *Cornus florida rubra*). In 1936, a solid planting of English ivy (*Hedera helix gracilis*) covered the hillside quadrants under the trees. Today only three of the original sycamores remain; the rest have been replaced with either anthracnose-resistant Bloodgood London plane trees (*Platanus x acerifolia* 'Bloodgood') or Liberty sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis* 'Liberty'). Kousa dogwoods (*Cornus kousa*), which are anthracnose-resistant, but have a different form and later bloom time, have been used to replace the white flowering dogwoods, and Cherokee Chief dogwood (*Cornus florida* 'Cherokee Chief'), an improved disease-resistant variety, which has a deeper color flower, has been used to replace the pink flowering dogwoods.

Many of the Canadian hemlocks have survived, but are in declining condition. Missing hemlocks have not been replaced because of their proven susceptibility to air pollution and disease. The American holly hedge along the east side of the west ascent is original, but lower in height and in need of the same corrective pruning as the cascade hedges. Only isolated original shrubs remain in what used to be a solid informal massing along the west side of the east ascent. As a result of missing or smaller replacement planting, what used to be a canopied hillside with a carpet of groundcover is now relatively open and covered with grass.

The Dante plaza has also changed considerably from what was originally intended to be a quiet evergreen-enclosed area to be used for poetry readings to essentially an open platform. For example, the dense masses of red cedars that enclosed it on both sides are gone, as are the Canadian hemlocks behind it that provided a back-drop for views of the statue, and shrub masses that encircled the evergreen plantings. Only three of the cryptomeria (*Cryptomeria japonica*) used to replace the hemlocks in recent years remain, along with isolated shrubs in the grass now around the plaza.

The border planting areas between the east and west ascents and the retaining walls along 15th and 16th Streets were originally covered with solid massings of various shrubs and groundcovers planted under specimen deciduous trees and informal clusters of evergreen and understory flowering trees, but only isolated specimens of original trees, such as American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and Canadian hemlock, and various kinds of shrubs remain. Few of these shrubs have integrity of both type and location; those that do are isolated and generally in poor condition. Most appear to have been planted as available, with no attempt to replicate original plantings. Grass has replaced the missing shrubs and groundcover, changing the densely-planted character of these areas. None of the vines planted at various intervals along the inside of the 15th and 16th Street retaining walls remain.

The Great Terrace (Compare plan sheets 19 and 23)

There are still two rows of American elms (*Ulmus americana*) in raised planters along the length of the great terrace, but all are replacements, varying in size from a newly-planted 2" caliper tree to several 14-24" caliper ones, but all have integrity of both location and type. One tree is missing.

The Mall (Compare plan sheets 19, 20, and 21 with plan sheets 23, 24 and 25)

As with the lower plaza, the visual and spatial quality of the mall has changed due to the loss of all the formally-clipped hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) hedges that originally lined both sides of the mall from Euclid Street to the Chapin Street entrance, paralleled the east side of the linden alley, and enclosed the childrens' play areas. The holly osmanthus (*Osmanthus heterophyllus*) hedges in front of the retaining walls flanking the Chapin Street entrance have integrity of location, but are of a different character and texture than the original hemlocks, although they are generally in good health and well-adapted to the urban conditions at the park.

White Oaks (*Quercus alba*) still line the mall between the Euclid and Chapin Street entrances and are massed in groves flanking the mall between the Chapin Street entrance and the great terrace, but many of the original trees have been lost. Most have been replaced in-kind and in essentially the same locations, although some have not been replaced in locations under the canopies of the original large trees, due to concerns that there would be too much root competition for the new trees to survive. As a result, the oaks now vary in size from the 30-40" or more caliper of the original trees to 3" caliper new ones, rather than being of a uniform size, and some are missing.

The linden alley between the main 16th Street entrance and the great terrace is similar in character to the original, but all of the original American lindens (*Tilia americana*) were replaced with littleleaf lindens (*Tilia cordata*) in 1982 when the new underground tie-backs to the 16th Street retaining walls were constructed. The littleleaf lindens are in the original locations and uniform in size, but have a smaller leaf and a more compact, pyramidal form than the coarser-leaved, broad-canopied American Lindens. Also, as previously-cited, the hemlock hedge originally planted behind the benches along the eastern side of the linden alley is missing, leaving that edge undefined; the western edge is defined by the 16th Street retaining wall.

Planters were built into the tops of the walls along the three sides of the terrace overlook at the main 16th Street entrance. These used to contain a variety of vines, such as wisteria, that were intended to overhang the entrance and soften the walls around it, but are now all empty. Likewise, none of the vines that were planted at intervals along the insides of the 15th and 16th Street retaining walls remain.

The informal border plantings flanking the mall along 15th and 16th Streets between the Euclid and Chapin Street cross-axes and along the eastern oak grove between the Chapin Street entrance and the great terrace retain some of their original character, but are much less densely planted. For example, a number of the original specimen shade and flowering trees remain and others have been replaced in-kind and in-location, and isolated masses of original kinds of shrubs exist in original locations, but most are replacements. In any case, most shrubs that do exist are in poor condition. As a result, what were originally densely-planted curvilinear masses of shrubs and groundcovers and small areas of grass along curvilinear walks are mostly grass, with isolated shrubs and trees.

The plantings on the slopes between the high and low retaining walls along 16th Street were originally similar in character to those in the borders along the mall. However, the shade and flowering trees on these slopes were solidly under-planted with curvilinear massings of shrubs

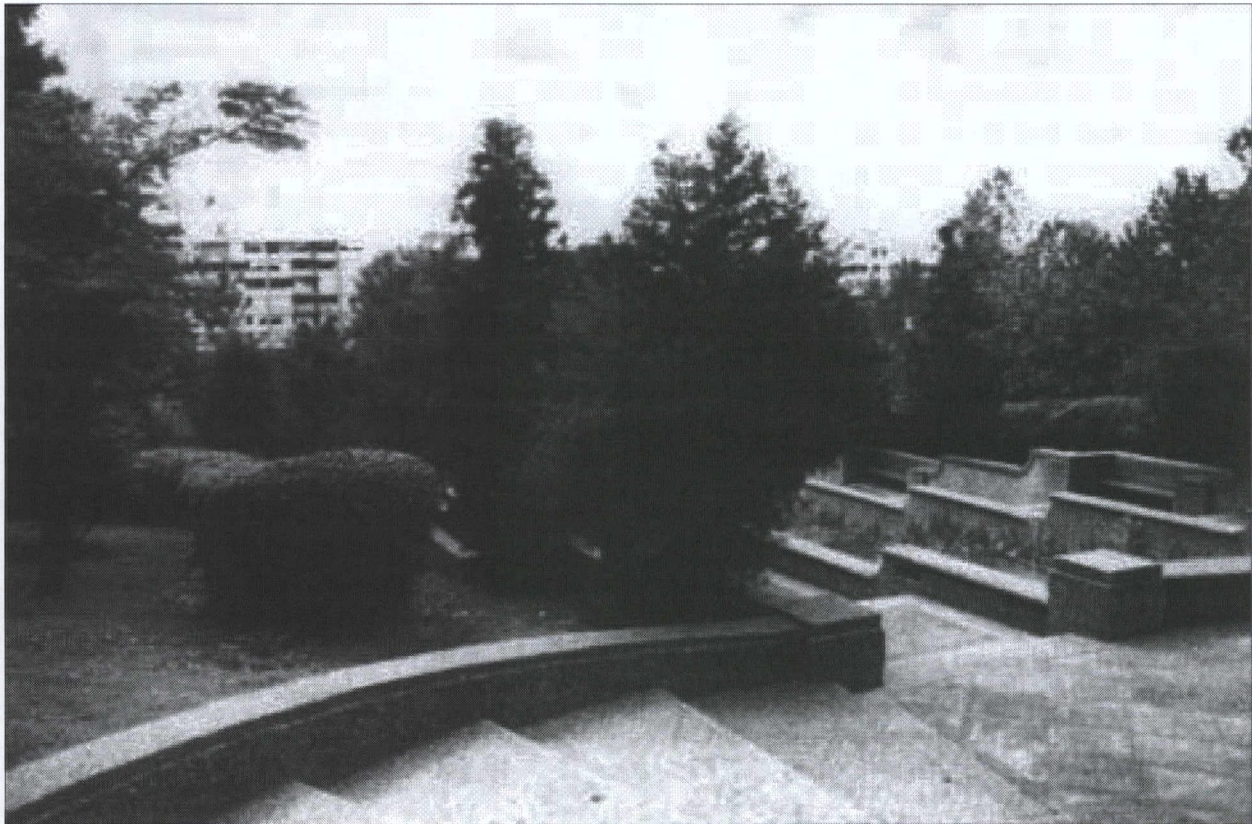
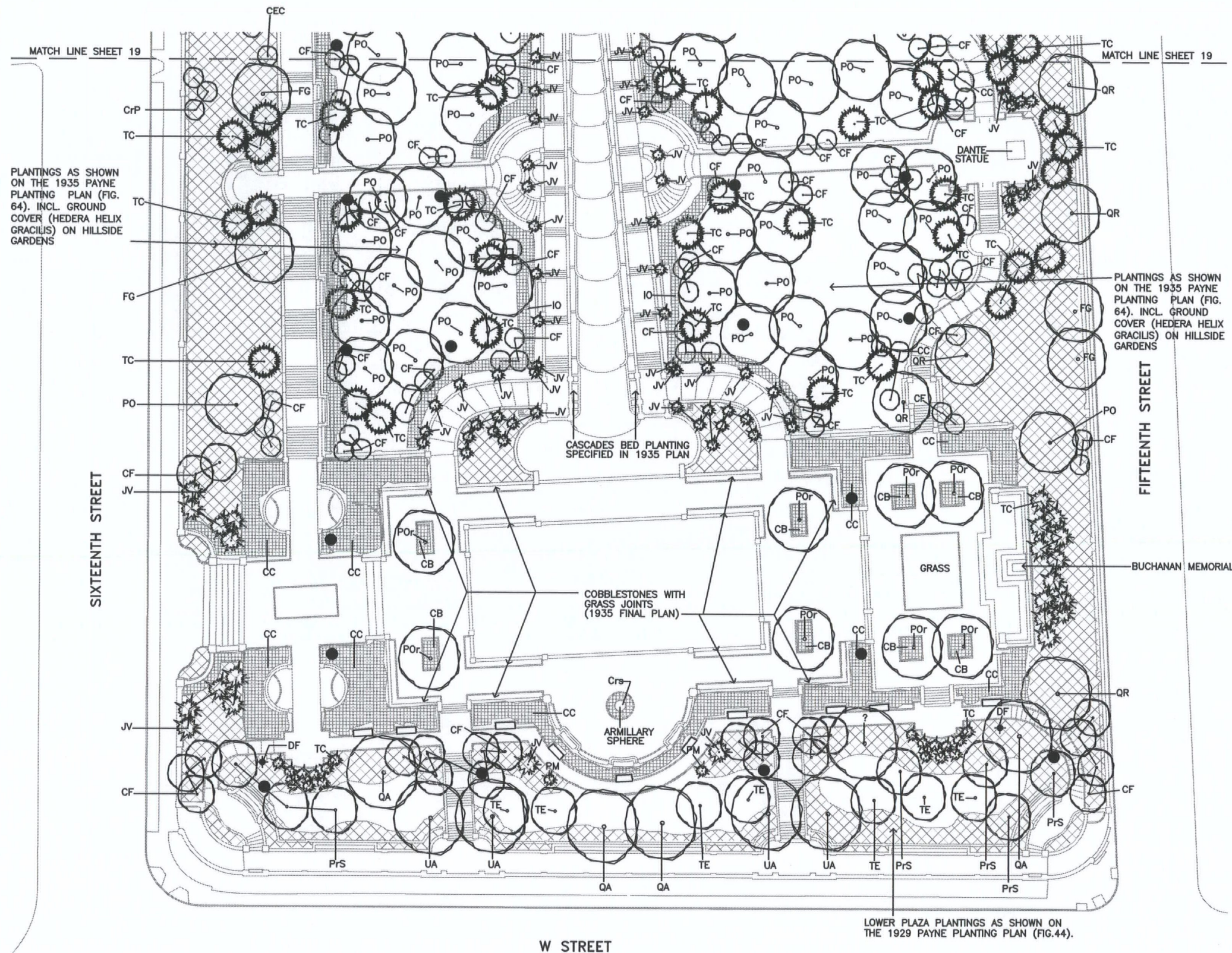


Figure 123: 1996 view of cedar trees before replacement and holly shrubs bordering cascades, looking southwest across lower gardens. Note the gap in the holly hedges visible to the left and the hedge itself without the flat top and sides it should have. (Land Ethics, Inc., 1996).

and groundcover to soften the appearance of the high retaining walls and eliminate the need to mow grass. Now only a few specimen shade, flowering and evergreen trees and isolated masses of shrubs remain, and grass has replaced the missing shrubs, groundcovers and vines. Because of the mature size of the remaining trees, the desired effect of softening the walls is still achieved.

Street Trees

Street trees have been planted outside the park along W, 16th, and Euclid Streets, but these are under the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia Department of Public Works Street Tree Division and types of trees planted have been selected by them, as have the locations of the trees, with no coordination with the National Park Service. As a result, both Norway maples and columnar English oaks have been variously planted along 16th Street and one oak is on axis with the lower 16th Street entrance into the park, obscuring direct views into the park toward the Buchanan Memorial. Both red and pin oaks have been planted along Euclid Street, but are not original. Only the single sycamore remaining along W Street is original to the park's completion.



NOTE:
SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS
AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.

PLANT MATERIALS LIST

TYPE	KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
DECIDUOUS TREES	AmC	Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
	AR	Acer rubrum	Red Maple
	CB	Carpinus betulus	European Hornbeam
	CC	Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam
	CeC	Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
	CF	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
	CFR	Cornus florida rubra	Pink Flowering Dogwood
	CrC	Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
	CrP	Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
	Crs	Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn species
	FG	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
	LS	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet-gum
	MG	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia
	MS	Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
	PO	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore
	POR	Platanus orientalis	Oriental Plane Tree
	PrS	Prunus species	Flowering Cherry
	QA	Quercus alba	White Oak
	QB	Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
	QR	Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
EVERGREEN TREES	PM	Pinus mugo	Mugo Pine
	PS	Pinus strobus	White Pine
	PV	Pinus virginiana	Virginia Pine
	TC	Tsuga canadensis	Canadian Hemlock
	IO	Ilex opaca	American Holly
	JV	Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar
	PA	Picea abies	Norway Spruce
	PM	Pinus mugo	Mugo Pine
	PS	Pinus strobus	White Pine
	PV	Pinus virginiana	Virginia Pine

NOTE:
ALL PLANTINGS SHOWN ARE BASED ON LAST APPROVED
PLANTING PLANS AS REFERENCED ON DRAWING PLUS
GENERAL PLANTING PLAN (FIG. 66) DATED OCT. 16, 1935
SHOWING FINAL ADJUSTMENTS TO PARK PLANTING BEFORE
ITS 1936 COMPLETION AND OFFICIAL OPENING.

KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- EVERGREEN TREE
- GRASS
- ▨ GROUND COVER
- ▤ SHRUB MASS
- ▧ HEDGE
- LIGHT STANDARD
- ⦿ DRINKING FOUNTAIN
- ▭ BENCH

50 25 0 25
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by: Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

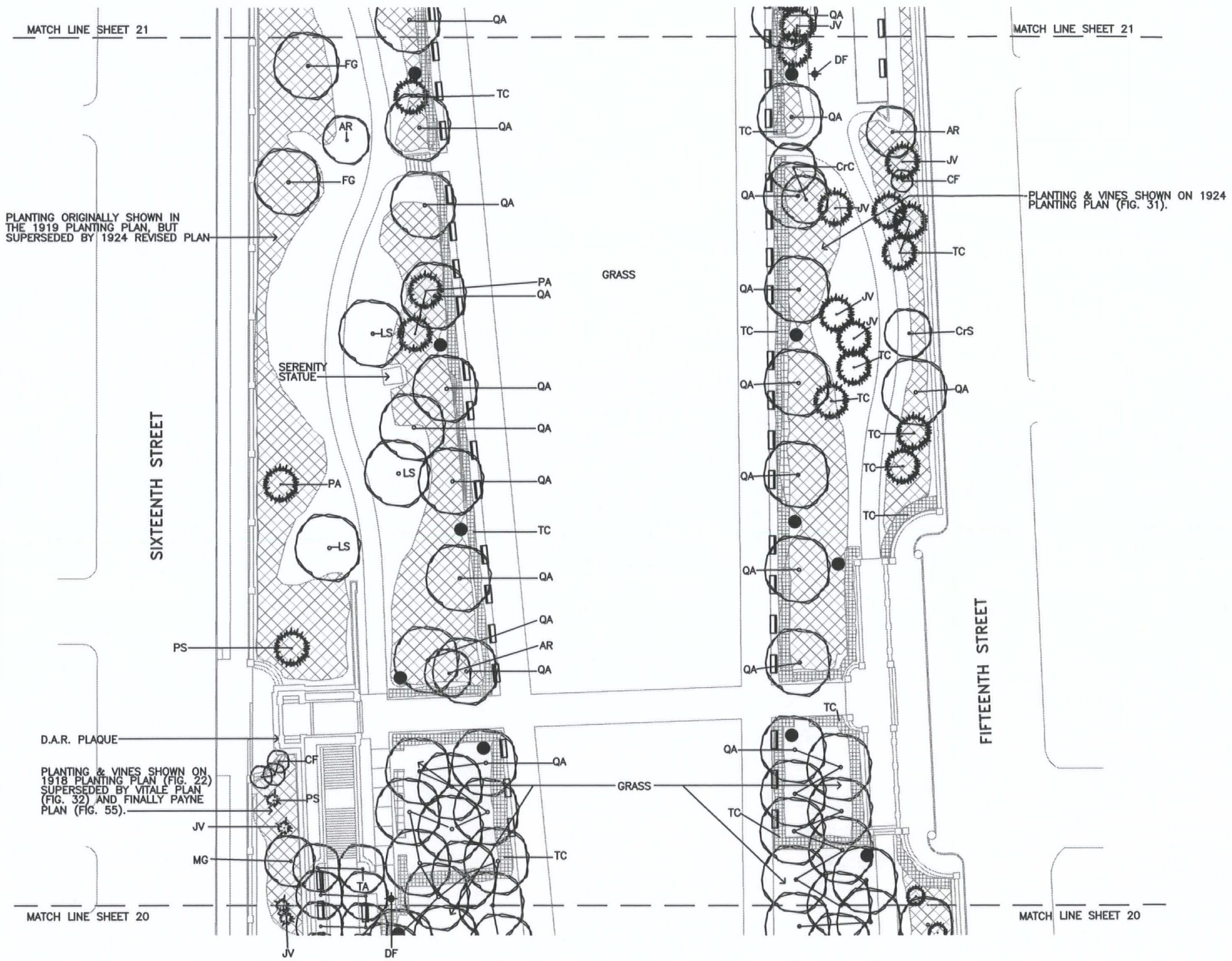
DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1936
AS PLANTED
PLAN 1
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 18

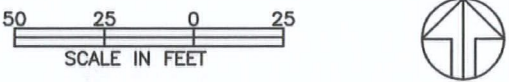


NOTE:
SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS
AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.

PLANT MATERIALS LIST			
TYPE	KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
DECIDUOUS TREES	AmC	Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
	AR	Acer rubrum	Red Maple
	CB	Carpinus betulus	European Hornbeam
	CC	Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam
	CaC	Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
	CF	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
	CFR	Cornus florida rubra	Pink Flowering Dogwood
	CrC	Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
	CrP	Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
	CrS	Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn species
	FG	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
	LS	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet-gum
	MG	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia
	MS	Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
	PO	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore
	POr	Platanus orientalis	Oriental Plane Tree
	PrS	Prunus species	Flowering Cherry
	QA	Quercus alba	White Oak
	QB	Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
	QR	Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
EVERGREEN TREES	RP	Robinia pseudoacacia	Black Locust
	TA	Tilia americana	American Linden
	TE	Tilia europea	European Linden
	UA	Ulmus americana	American Elm
	IO	Ilex opaca	American Holly
	JV	Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar
	PA	Picea abies	Norway Spruce
	PM	Pinus mugo	Mugo Pine
	PS	Pinus strobus	White Pine
	PV	Pinus virginiana	Virginia Pine
	TC	Tsuga canadensis	Canadian Hemlock

NOTE:
ALL PLANTINGS SHOWN ARE BASED ON LAST APPROVED
PLANTING PLANS AS REFERENCED ON DRAWING PLUS
GENERAL PLANTING PLAN (FIG. 66) DATED OCT. 16, 1935
SHOWING FINAL ADJUSTMENTS TO PARK PLANTING BEFORE
ITS 1936 COMPLETION AND OFFICIAL OPENING.

- KEY
- DECIDUOUS TREE
 - EVERGREEN TREE
 - GRASS
 - GROUND COVER
 - SHRUB MASS
 - HEDGE
 - LIGHT STANDARD
 - DRINKING FOUNTAIN
 - BENCH



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service — National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1936
AS PLANTED
PLAN 3
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 20

NOTE:
SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS
AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.

PLANT MATERIALS LIST

TYPE	KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
DECIDUOUS TREES	AmC	Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
	AR	Acer rubrum	Red Maple
	CB	Carpinus betulus	European Hornbeam
	CC	Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam
	CaC	Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
	CF	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
	CFR	Cornus florida rubra	Pink Flowering Dogwood
	CrC	Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
	CrP	Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
	Crs	Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn species
	FG	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
	LS	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet-gum
	MG	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia
	MS	Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
	PO	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore
	POr	Platanus orientalis	Oriental Plane Tree
	PS	Prunus species	Flowering Cherry
	QA	Quercus alba	White Oak
	QB	Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
	QR	Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
EVERGREEN TREES	RP	Robinia pseudoacacia	Black Locust
	TA	Tilia americana	American Linden
	TE	Tilia europea	European Linden
	UA	Ulmus americana	American Elm
	IO	Ilex opaca	American Holly
	JV	Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar
	PA	Picea abies	Norway Spruce
	PM	Pinus mugo	Mugo Pine
	PS	Pinus strobus	White Pine
	PV	Pinus virginiana	Virginia Pine
	TC	Tsuga canadensis	Canadian Hemlock

NOTE:
ALL PLANTINGS SHOWN ARE BASED ON LAST APPROVED
PLANTING PLANS AS REFERENCED ON DRAWING PLUS
GENERAL PLANTING PLAN (FIG. 66) DATED OCT. 16, 1935
SHOWING FINAL ADJUSTMENTS TO PARK PLANTING BEFORE
ITS 1936 COMPLETION AND OFFICIAL OPENING.

KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- EVERGREEN TREE
- GRASS
- GROUND COVER
- SHRUB MASS
- HEDGE
- LIGHT STANDARD
- DRINKING FOUNTAIN
- BENCH



MERIDIAN HILL PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service — National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1936
AS PLANTED
PLAN 4
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 21

MATCH LINE SHEET 24

MATCH LINE SHEET 24

SIXTEENTH STREET

FIFTEENTH STREET

W STREET

KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE
● EVER GREEN TREE

NOTES:

1. SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.
2. CANOPY SIZE SHOWN INDICATES SPREAD OF PLANT AT TIME OF SURVEY, NOT EVENTUAL OR RELATIVE SIZE.

50 25 0 25
SCALE IN FEET



PLANT MATERIALS LIST

TYPE	KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
DECIDUOUS TREES	AP	Acer platanoides	Norway Maple
	AmC	Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple
	AmC	Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
	CC	Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam
	CeC	Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
	CF	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
	CFC	C. florida "Cherokee Chief"	Cherokee Chief Dogwood (Pink)
	CK	Cornus kousa	Kousa Dogwood
	CL	Celtis laevigata	Sugar Hackberry
	CrC	Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
	Crs	Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn species
	CrI	Crataegus intricata	Thicket Hawthorn
	FC	Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
	FG	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
	FP	Fraxinus penn. lanceolata	Green Ash
	GT	Gleditsia triacanthos	Common Honeylocust
	HV	Hamamelis virginiana	Common Witch-Hazel
	LS	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet-gum
	MG	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia
	MSo	Magnolia soulangeana	Saucer Magnolia
	MSI	Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
	PO	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore
	PAB	P. acerifolia "Bloodgood"	Bloodgood London Plane Tree
	POL	P. occidentalis "Liberty"	Liberty Sycamore
	PS	Prunus species	Flowering Cherry
	PS	Prunus serotina	Black Cherry
	QA	Quercus alba	White Oak
	OB	Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
	OP	Quercus phellos	Willow Oak
	OPa	Quercus palustris	Pin Oak
	ORF	Quercus robur fastigiata	Columnar English Oak
	OR	Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
	TA	Tilia americana	American Linden
	TE	Tilia europaea	European Linden
	UL	Ulmus cordata	Littleleaf Linden
	UP	Ulmus americana	American Elm
	VP	Viburnum prunifolium	Blackhaw Viburnum
	ZS	Zelkova serrata	Japanese Zelkova
EVERGREEN TREES	CRJ	Cryptomeria japonica	Cryptomeria
	JV	Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar
	JVE	Juniperus virginiana "Emerald Sentinel"	Emerald Sentinel Red Cedar
	PIS	Pinus strobus	Eastern White Pine
	TCn	Tsuga canadensis	Canadian Hemlock
	TCr	Tsuga caroliniana	Carolina Hemlock
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	TD	Taxodium distichum	Baldcypress
	AG	Abelia grandiflora	Glossy Abelia
	ASI	Acanthopanax sieboldianus	Fiveleaf Acanthopanax
	BJ	Berberis julianae	Wintergreen Barberry
	BT	Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry
	CA	Cornus amomum	Silky Dogwood
	CAS	Cornus alba "Sibirica"	Siberian Dogwood
	ChJ	Chaenomeles japonica	Japanese Quince
	ChL	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Flowering Quince
	DE	Deutzia lemoinei	Lemoine Deutzia
	Ea	Euonymus alatus	Winged Euonymus
	EIA	Euonymus alatus	Russian Olive
	EM	Euonymus multiflorus	Cherry Euonymus
	FI	Forsythia x intermedia	Border Forsythia
	FS	Forsythia suspensa	Weeping Forsythia
	FSF	Forsythia suspensa "Fortunei"	Fortune Weeping Forsythia
	JN	Jasminum nudiflorum	Winter Jasmine
	LI	Lagerstroemia indica	Crape Myrtle
	LI	Ligustrum lucidum	Glossy Privet
	LOb	Ligustrum obtusifolium	Border Privet
	LOR	L. obtusifolium "Regelianum"	Regal Border Privet
	LOV	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California Privet
	MC	Myrica cerifera	Wax Myrtle
	MP	Myrica pennsylvanica	Sawberry
	PG	Philadelphus grandiflorus	Big Scentless Mockorange
	PTf	Poncirus trifoliata	Trifoliate Orange
	RS	Rosa species	Rose
	RSc	Rodotypos scandens	Jetbead
	SA	Symphoricarpos albus	Snowberry
	SO	Symphoricarpos orbiculatus	Indian Current
	SpW	S.x bumalda "Anthony Waterer"	Anthony Waterer Spiraea
	ST	Spiraea thunbergii	Siebold Spiraea
	VS	Spiraea x Vanhouttei	Bridal-wreath Spiraea
	Vg	Viburnum dentatum	Arrowwood Viburnum
	Vdi	Viburnum dilatatum	Linden Viburnum
	VL	Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry Viburnum
	VT	Viburnum tomentosum	Doublefile Viburnum
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	ICe	Ilex crenata	Japanese Holly
	ICR	Ilex cornuta "Rotunda"	Rotunda Holly
	IO	Ilex opaca	American Holly
	MB	Mahonia bealei	Leatherleaf Mahonia
HERBACEOUS	OH	Osmanthus heterophyllus	Holly Osmanthus
	PC	Pieris floribunda	Scarlet Firethorn
	PC	Pieris coccinea	Mountain Pieris
	RhS	Rhododendron species	Rhododendron
	Tab	Taxus baccata	English Yew
	TaC	Taxus canadensis	Canadian Yew
HERBACEOUS	YF	Yucca filamentosa	Adam's-needle
	YP	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

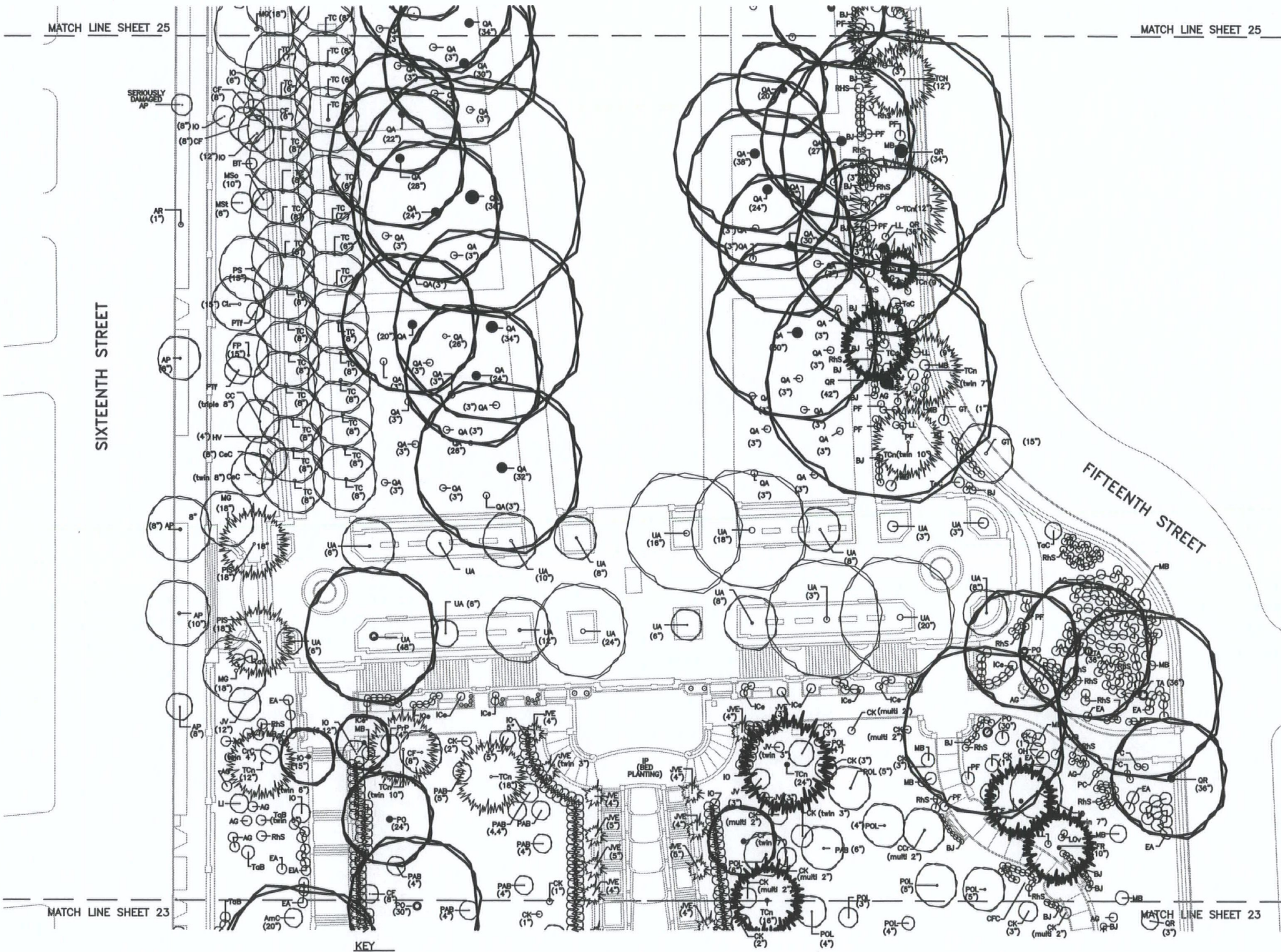
Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1996
EXISTING PLANTING 1
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 23



PLANT MATERIALS LIST

TYPE	KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
DECIDUOUS TREES	AP	Acer platanoides	Norway Maple
	AmC	Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple
	AmC	Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
	CC	Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam
	CC	Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
	CF	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
	CFC	C. florida "Cherokee Chief"	Cherokee Chief Dogwood (Pink)
	CK	Cornus kousa	Kousa Dogwood
	CL	Celtis laevigata	Sugar Hackberry
	CrC	Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
	CrS	Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn species
	CrI	Crataegus intricata	Thicket Hawthorn
	CP	Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
	FG	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
	FP	Fraxinus penn. lanceolata	Green Ash
	GT	Gleditsia triacanthos	Common Honeylocust
	HV	Hamamelis virginiana	Common Witch-Hazel
	LS	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet-gum
	MG	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia
	MSO	Magnolia spulangeana	Saucer Magnolia
	MST	Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
	PO	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore
	PAB	P. acerfolia "Bloodgood"	Bloodgood London Plane Tree
	POL	P. occidentalis "Liberty"	Liberty Sycamore
	PrS	Prunus species	Flowering Cherry
	PS	Prunus serotina	Black Cherry
	QA	Quercus alba	White Oak
	OB	Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
	OP	Quercus phellos	Willow Oak
	OPa	Quercus palustris	Pin Oak
	ORF	Quercus robur fastigiata	Columnar English Oak
	QR	Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
	TA	Tilia americana	American Linden
	TE	Tilia europaea	European Linden
	TC	Tilia cordata	Littleleaf Linden
	UA	Ulmus americana	American Elm
	VP	Viburnum prunifolium	Blackhaw Viburnum
	ZS	Zelkova serrata	Japanese Zelkova
EVERGREEN TREES	CRJ	Cryptomeria japonica	Cryptomeria
	JV	Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar
	JVE	Juniperus virginiana "Emerald Sentinel"	Emerald Sentinel Red Cedar
	PS	Pinus strobus	Eastern White Pine
	TCn	Tsuga canadensis	Canadian Hemlock
	TCr	Tsuga caroliniana	Carolina Hemlock
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	TD	Toxodium distichum	Baldcypress
	AG	Abelia grandiflora	Glossy Abelia
	ASI	Acanthopanax sieboldianus	Fiveleaf Acanthopanax
	BJ	Berberis julianae	Wintergreen Barberry
	BT	Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry
	CA	Cornus amomum	Silky Dogwood
	CAS	Cornus alba "Sibirica"	Siberian Dogwood
	ChJ	Chaenomeles japonica	Japanese Quince
	ChL	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Flowering Quince
	DL	Deutzia lemoinei	Lemoine Deutzia
	EA	Euonymus alatus	Winged Euonymus
	EIA	Elaeagnus angustifolia	Russian Olive
	EM	Elaeagnus multiflora	Cherry Elaeagnus
	FS	Forsythia x intermedia	Border Forsythia
	FS	Forsythia suspensa	Weeping Forsythia
	FSF	Forsythia suspensa "Fortunei"	Fortune Weeping Forsythia
	JN	Jasminum nudiflorum	Winter Jasmine
	LI	Lagerstroemia indica	Crape Myrtle
	LL	Ligustrum lucidum	Glossy Privet
	LOb	Ligustrum obtusifolium	Border Privet
	LOR	L. obtusifolium "Regelianum"	Regal Border Privet
	LOV	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California Privet
	MC	Myrica cerifera	Wax Myrtle
	MP	Myrica pensylvanica	Bayberry
	PO	Philadelphus grandiflorus	Big Scentless Mockorange
	PR	Poncirus trifoliata	Trifoliate Orange
	RS	Rosa species	Rose
	RSc	Rodotypos scandens	Jetbead
	SA	Symphoricarpos albus	Snowberry
	SO	Symphoricarpos orbiculatus	Indian Current
	SpW	S.x bumalda "Anthony Waterer"	Anthony Waterer Spiraea
	ST	Spiraea thunbergii	Siebold Spiraea
	SV	Spiraea x Vanhouttei	Bridal-wreath Spiraea
	VDe	Viburnum dentatum	Arrowwood Viburnum
	VDI	Viburnum dilatatum	Linden Viburnum
	VL	Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry Viburnum
	VT	Viburnum tomentosum	Doublefile Viburnum
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	ICe	Ilex crenata	Japanese Holly
	ICR	Ilex cornuta "Rotunda"	Rotunda Holly
	IO	Ilex opaca	American Holly
	MB	Mahonia bealei	Leatherleaf Mahonia
	OH	Osmanthus heterophyllus	Holly Osmanthus
HERBACEOUS	PC	Pyracantha coccinea	Scarlet Firethorn
	PF	Pieris floribunda	Mountain Pieris
	RhS	Rhododendron species	Rhododendron
	TaB	Taxus baccata	English Yew
	TaC	Taxus canadensis	Canadian Yew
	YF	Yucca filamentosa	Adam's-needle
	YP	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag

MERIDIAN HILL PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1996
EXISTING
PLANTING 2
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 24

MATCH LINE SHEET 26

MATCH LINE SHEET 26

SIXTEENTH STREET

FIFTEENTH STREET

MATCH LINE SHEET 24

MATCH LINE SHEET 24

KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE
● EVER GREEN TREE

- NOTES:
1. SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.
2. CANOPY SIZE SHOWN INDICATES SPREAD OF PLANT AT TIME OF SURVEY, NOT EVENTUAL OR RELATIVE SIZE.

50 25 0 25
SCALE IN FEET



PLANT MATERIALS LIST

TYPE	KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
DECIDUOUS TREES	AP	Acer platanoides	Norway Maple
	AmC	Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple
	AmC	Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
	CC	Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam
	CC	Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
	CF	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
	CFC	C. florida "Cherokee Chief"	Cherokee Chief Dogwood (Pink)
	CK	Cornus kousa	Kousa Dogwood
	CL	Celtis laevigata	Sugar Hackberry
	CrC	Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
	CrS	Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn species
	CrI	Crataegus intricata	Thicket Hawthorn
	CP	Crataegus phaenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
	FC	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
	FP	Fraxinus penn. lanceolata	Green Ash
	GT	Gleditsia triacanthos	Common Honeylocust
	HV	Hamamelis virginiana	Common Witch-Hazel
	LS	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet-gum
	MG	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia
	MSa	Magnolia soulangeana	Saucer Magnolia
	MSI	Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
	PO	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore
	PAB	P. acerifolia "Bloodgood"	Bloodgood London Plane Tree
	POL	P. occidentalis "Liberty"	Liberty Sycamore
	PS	Prunus species	Flowering Cherry
	PS	Prunus serotina	Black Cherry
	QA	Quercus alba	White Oak
	QB	Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
	QP	Quercus phellos	Willow Oak
	QPa	Quercus palustris	Pin Oak
	QRF	Quercus robur fastigiata	Columnar English Oak
	QR	Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
	TA	Tilia americana	American Linden
	TE	Tilia europaea	European Linden
	TC	Tilia cordata	Littleleaf Linden
	UA	Ulmus americana	American Elm
	VP	Viburnum prunifolium	Blackhaw Viburnum
	ZS	Zelkova serrata	Japanese Zelkova
EVERGREEN TREES	CRJ	Cryptomeria japonica	Cryptomeria
	JV	Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar
	JVE	Juniperus virginiana "Emerald Sentinel"	Emerald Sentinel Red Cedar
	PIS	Pinus strobus	Eastern White Pine
	TCn	Tsuga canadensis	Canadian Hemlock
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	ICr	Isuga caroliniana	Carolina Hemlock
	TD	Taxodium distichum	Baldcypress
	AG	Abelia grandiflora	Glossy Abelia
	ASi	Acanthopanax sieboldianus	Fiveleaf Acanthopanax
	BJ	Berberis julianae	Wintergreen Barberry
	BT	Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry
	CA	Cornus amomum	Silky Dogwood
	CAS	Cornus alba "Sibirica"	Siberian Dogwood
	ChJ	Chaenomeles japonica	Japanese Quince
	ChL	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Flowering Quince
	DL	Deutzia lemoinei	Lemoine Deutzia
	EA	Euonymus alatus	Winged Euonymus
	EIA	Elaeagnus angustifolia	Russian Olive
	EM	Elaeagnus multiflora	Cherry Elaeagnus
	FI	Forsythia x intermedia	Border Forsythia
	FS	Forsythia suspensa	Weeping Forsythia
	FSF	Forsythia suspensa "Fortunei"	Fortune Weeping Forsythia
	JN	Jasminum nudiflorum	Winter Jasmine
	LI	Lagerstroemia indica	Crape Myrtle
	LI	Ligustrum lucidum	Glossy Privet
	LOb	Ligustrum obtusifolium	Border Privet
	LOR	L. obtusifolium "Regelianum"	Regal Border Privet
	LOV	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California Privet
	MC	Myrica cerifera	Wax Myrtle
	MP	Myrica pennsylvanica	Sawberry
	PG	Philadelphus grandiflorus	Big Scentsless Mockorange
	PTf	Poncirus trifoliata	Trifoliate Orange
	RoS	Rosa species	Rose
	RSc	Rodotypos scandens	Jetbead
	SA	Symphoricarpos albus	Snowberry
	SO	Symphoricarpos orbiculatus	Indian Current
	SpW	S.x bumalda "Anthony Waterer"	Anthony Waterer Spiraea
	ST	Spiraea thunbergii	Siebold Spiraea
	SV	Spiraea x Vanhouttei	Bridal-wreath Spiraea
	VDa	Viburnum dentatum	Arrowwood Viburnum
	VL	Viburnum ciliatum	Linden Viburnum
	VI	Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry Viburnum
	VT	Viburnum tomentosum	Doublefile Viburnum
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	ICe	Ilex crenata	Japanese Holly
	ICR	Ilex cornuta "Rotunda"	Rotunda Holly
	IO	Ilex opaca	American Holly
	MB	Mahonia bealei	Leatherleaf Mahonia
	OH	Osmanthus heterophyllus	Holly Osmanthus
HERBACEOUS	PC	Pyracantha coccinea	Scarlet Firethorn
	PfS	Pieris floribunda	Mountain Pieris
	RhS	Rhododendron species	Rhododendron
	TaB	Taxus baccata	English Yew
	TaC	Taxus canadensis	Canadian Yew
HERBACEOUS	YF	Yucca filamentosa	Adam's-needle
	IP	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

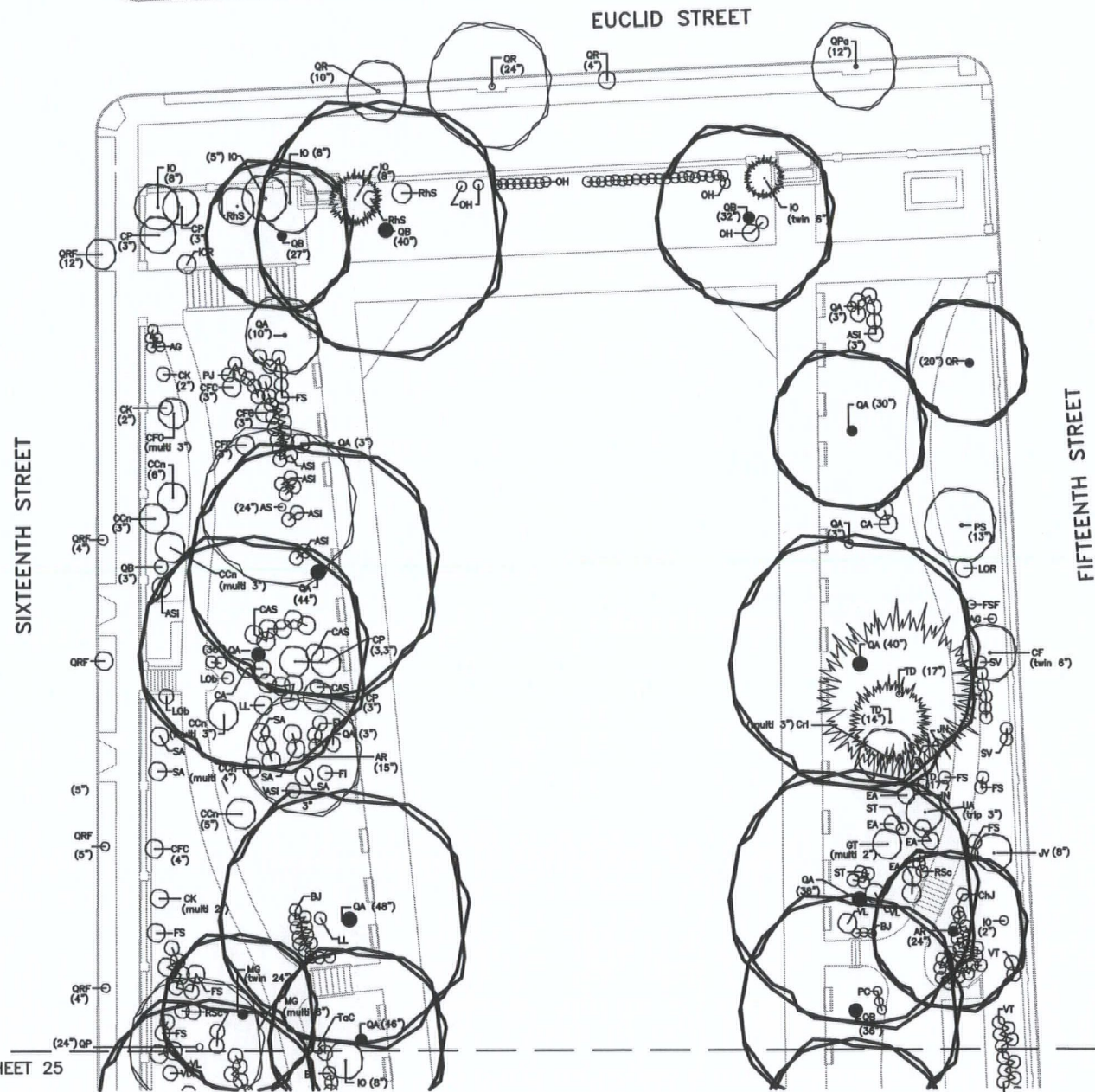
DRAWN BY:
MACS

1996
EXISTING PLANTING 3
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.

872
87141

SHEET 25



- KEY
- DECIDUOUS TREE
 - EVER GREEN TREE

- NOTES:
1. SMALLER SCALE HERBACEOUS AND AQUATIC PLANTS AND VINES ARE NOT REFLECTED ON THESE DRAWINGS.
 2. CANOPY SIZE SHOWN INDICATES SPREAD OF PLANT AT TIME OF SURVEY, NOT EVENTUAL OR RELATIVE SIZE.

50 25 0 25
SCALE IN FEET



PLANT MATERIALS LIST

TYPE	KEY	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME
DECIDUOUS TREES	AP	Acer platanoides	Norway Maple
	AmC	Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple
	AmC	Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
	CC	Carpinus caroliniana	American Hornbeam
	CeC	Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
	CF	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood
	CFC	C. florida "Cherokee Chief"	Cherokee Chief Dogwood (Pink)
	CK	Cornus kousa	Kousa Dogwood
	CI	Celtis laevigata	Sugar Hackberry
	CRC	Crataegus crusgalli	Cockspur Hawthorn
	Cra	Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn species
	CrI	Crataegus intricata	Thicket Hawthorn
	CP	Crataegus phoenopyrum	Washington Hawthorn
	FG	Fagus grandifolia	American Beech
	FP	Fraxinus penn. lanceolata	Green Ash
	GT	Gleditsia triacanthos	Common Honeylocust
	HV	Hamamelis virginiana	Common Witch-Hazel
	LS	Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweet-gum
	MG	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia
	MSO	Magnolia soulangeana	Saucer Magnolia
	MST	Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
	PO	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore
	PAB	P. acerifolia "Bloodgood"	Bloodgood London Plane Tree
	POL	P. occidentalis "Liberty"	Liberty Sycamore
	PrS	Prunus species	Flowering Cherry
	PS	Prunus serotina	Black Cherry
	QA	Quercus alba	White Oak
	QB	Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
	QP	Quercus phellos	Willow Oak
	QPa	Quercus palustris	Pin Oak
	QRF	Quercus robur fastigiata	Columnar English Oak
	QR	Quercus borealis	Northern Red Oak
	TA	Tilia americana	American Linden
	TE	Tilia europaea	European Linden
	TC	Tilia cordata	Littleleaf Linden
	UA	Ulmus americana	American Elm
	VP	Viburnum prunifolium	Blackhaw Viburnum
	ZS	Zelkova serrata	Japanese Zelkova
EVERGREEN TREES	CRJ	Cryptomeria japonica	Cryptomeria
	JV	Juniperus virginiana	Eastern Red Cedar
	JVE	Juniperus virginiana "Emerald Sentinel"	Emerald Sentinel Red Cedar
	PIS	Pinus strobus	Eastern White Pine
	TCn	Tsuga canadensis	Canadian Hemlock
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS	TCr	Tsuga caroliniana	Carolina Hemlock
	TD	Taxodium distichum	Baldcypress
	AG	Abelia grandiflora	Glossy Abelia
	ASi	Acanthopanax sieboldianus	Fiveleaf Acanthopanax
	BJ	Berberis julianae	Wintergreen Barberry
	BT	Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry
	CA	Cornus amomum	Silky Dogwood
	CAS	Cornus alba "Sibirica"	Siberian Dogwood
	ChJ	Chaenomeles japonica	Japanese Quince
	ChL	Chaenomeles lagenaria	Flowering Quince
	DL	Deutzia lemoinei	Lemoine Deutzia
	EA	Euonymus alatus	Winged Euonymus
	EIA	Elaeagnus angustifolia	Russian Olive
	EM	Elaeagnus multiflora	Cherry Elaeagnus
	FI	Forsythia x intermedia	Border Forsythia
	FS	Forsythia suspensa	Weeping Forsythia
	FSF	Forsythia suspensa "Fortunei"	Fortune Weeping Forsythia
	JN	Jasminum nudiflorum	Winter Jasmine
	LI	Lagerstroemia indica	Crape Myrtle
	LI	Ligustrum lucidum	Glossy Privet
	LOb	Ligustrum obtusifolium	Border Privet
	LOR	L. obtusifolium "Regelianum"	Regal Border Privet
	LOV	Ligustrum ovalifolium	California Privet
	MC	Myrica cerifera	Wax Myrtle
	MP	Myrica pensylvanica	Bayberry
	PG	Philadelphus grandiflorus	Big Scentless Mockorange
	PTf	Poncirus trifoliata	Trifoliate Orange
	RS	Rosa species	Rose
	RSc	Rodotypos scandens	Jetbead
	SA	Symphoricarpos albus	Snowberry
	SO	Symphoricarpos orbiculatus	Indian Current
	SOw	S. x bumalda "Anthony Waterer"	Anthony Waterer Spiraea
	SV	Spiraea x Vanhouttei	Bridal-wreath Spiraea
	VDa	Viburnum dentatum	Arrowwood Viburnum
	VDi	Viburnum dilatatum	Linden Viburnum
	VL	Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry Viburnum
	VT	Viburnum tomentosum	Doublefile Viburnum
EVERGREEN SHRUBS	ICe	Ilex crenata	Japanese Holly
	ICR	Ilex cornuta "Rotunda"	Rotunda Holly
	IO	Ilex opaca	American Holly
	MB	Mahonia bealei	Leatherleaf Mahonia
	OH	Osmantbus heterophyllus	Holly Osmantbus
HERBACEOUS	PC	Pyracantha coccinea	Scarlet Firethorn
	PF	Pieris floribunda	Mountain Pieris
	RhS	Rhododendron species	Rhododendron
	TaB	Taxus baccata	English Yew
	TaC	Taxus canadensis	Canadian Yew
HERBACEOUS	YF	Yucca filamentosa	Adam's-needle
	IF	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag

MERIDIAN HILL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1996
EXISTING PLANTING 4
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 26

3.5 Structures, Furnishings, and Objects

The exposed aggregate concrete work at Meridian Hill Park is notable for several reasons, as enumerated in the NHL nomination form, including being “one of the earliest and finest examples of architectural concrete in North America, executed under the aegis of a...master.”¹ It is testimony to the exposed aggregate concrete work at Meridian Hill Park that, despite over sixty years of use and exposure, most of the structure, surfaces, and aggregate colors are still essentially intact, although some repairs have been made. Unfortunately, few of the repairs match the quality and appearance of the original construction.

Initially, George Burnap wanted to use traditional methods and materials, namely stone, for the park structures. Cost precluded the use of stone so reinforced concrete was considered.

In the earliest stages of the extensive experimentation that ultimately led to Meridian Hill’s concrete work, Burnap was seeking to replicate the effect of broached and rusticated stone and stucco, with disappointing results (see drawings and photo of test panel). A number of people were involved in evaluating the test panels and making suggestions. John J. Earley is commonly credited with work on the first retaining walls of the park; Horace Peaslee became the architect of the park in 1917 when Burnap returned to private practice. Every stage of the park’s design and construction was reviewed in considerable detail by the Commission of Fine Arts, including such prominent architects, landscape architects, and sculptors of the period as John Russell Pope, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., James Greenleaf, and Daniel Chester French.

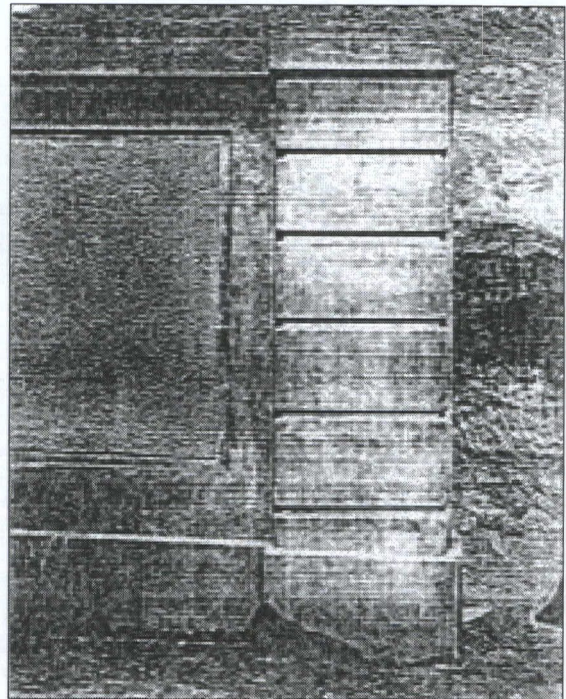
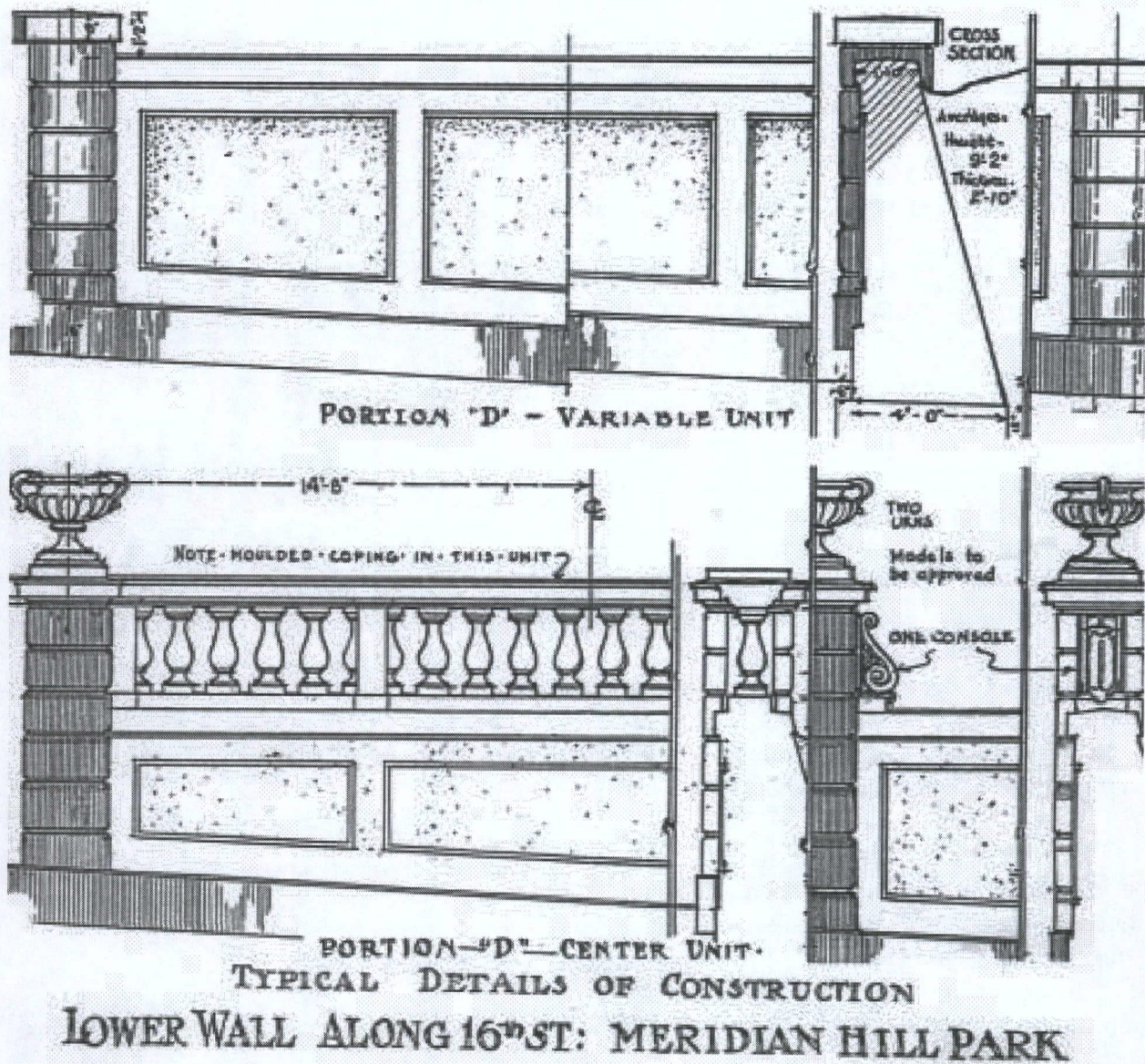


Figure 124: Photograph of one of the early rejected test panels, showing the pebble-dash finish in the center panel and the vertical scoring on the pier to simulate tool marks on stone. (RCP-CRF, dated 7-13-1?, the last number of the date missing).

¹ Letter from American Concrete Institute in support of the nomination of Meridian Hill Park as a National Landmark. The “master” referred to is John Joseph Earley who continued to develop techniques for exposed aggregate concrete throughout his entire career. One of the particularly interesting aspects of the concrete work at Meridian Hill Park is that the early experiments resulted in methods and techniques that were then applied by subsequent general contractors at the site.



Prepared in the Office of Public Bldgs & Grounds
under the Direction of Col. Wm. W. Harris, in Charge,
by George Burnap, Landscape Architect.

Drawn by H. W. Peaslee.

Feb. 1st, 1915.

Figure 125: Section of drawing sheet dated February 1, 1915 for 16th Street retaining wall, prepared by Burnap, drawn by Peaslee, showing typical sections of wall and section below the 16th Street overlook with baluster, console, and urns, all now missing.

After some of the early test panels, they then began working with the exposed pebble finishes we see in the park today. "Mosaic designs on walls and walkways are commonly used in Italy. Called *mosaico veneziano*, this pebble work was sometimes combined with shell work, or with stuccoed surfaces....Meridian Hill Park, where the park is constructed of exposed aggregate concrete of a quality seldom, if ever achieved elsewhere,...achieved the effects similar to mosaic work." Horace Peaslee considered that the "outstanding feature of Meridian Hill Park is its use of concrete of interesting texture and surface for all its walls, walks, and decorative work."²

The builders and designers of the park may have been most impressed by their innovative use of exposed aggregate concrete and their achievement of the warm beige color, but the perspective of sixty subsequent years of construction in concrete suggests that the astonishing durability of the concrete and finish and the extraordinary fineness of detail and craftsmanship are equally or more impressive.

Although John Joseph Earley is generally credited with the achievement of the extraordinary concrete effects at Meridian Hill Park, the only record found in this investigation of Earley as a contractor on the job is an invoice dated September 13, 1923 from John J. Earley, Architectural Sculpture Studio to the United States of America for

"To furnishing [sic] all materials, labor, and equipment and constructing scrubbed concrete walks in Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C. in accordance with agreement of May 19, 1923

"1006 square yards @ \$5.98 ————— \$6015.88"

However, knowing of Earley's later interest in innovative uses of concrete, polychromy, and mosaic effects, it would appear that this project inspired what became a life-long pursuit of beauty in concrete and that his early involvement with the park was to help develop the methods that would be used with great success by subsequent contractors.

The HABS description of the development of the process for the concrete is:

"Following initial experimentation with surface treated reinforced concrete resulting in a stucco effect, this approach was abandoned because it was found that this method of finish did not convey the strength [desired for the] retaining wall at Sixteenth Street, the first architectural feature to be constructed. It was decided that it would be necessary to develop a method of using the material which would bring out the qualities of the concrete itself, rather than reading as applied stucco.

"After careful and painstaking experimentation during which forms were discarded over and over again, a system was devised [that], it was hoped, would meet the architectural specifications in terms of texture, color, and form. Earley then asked the architects to submit design requirements without restriction as to material. It was found that by varying

the ratios of cement, sand, and aggregate, a material could be created [that] would meet architectural specifications in fine detail. An early ratio of cement to sand to aggregate of 1:1:3 was changed to increase the proportion of sand but particularly of aggregate. More aggregate was used so that the entire surface of finished concrete would consist of evenly distributed aggregate pebbles of graded sizes. The Potomac River pebbles were sized by sieves [to] eliminate pebbles of over and under specified sizes. The forms were built to be sealed on the interior to diminish the suction effect [that] sometimes pulled the concrete off with the forms. When the concrete was judged to be sufficiently dry, forms were removed and the concrete was scrubbed³ with steel brushes dipped in a solution of muriatic acid to eliminate the mortar “skin” and achieve a brightness in the pebbles [that] would have been obscured by a covering of concrete. After the forms were removed, and the concrete was scrubbed, it was washed down with water. During the drying period, the concrete was carefully watched and washed down again if it appeared to be drying too quickly during the curing period.

“Earley compared the intensified color [resulting] from the mix of pebble colors reflecting the sun from polished surfaces to the color effects achieved by the impressionists or by cross-hatching with pastels. The color was determined almost entirely by the color of the pebbles rather than the concrete itself....

“The exposed pebble textures were used on wall panels, the face of copings, on rusticated blocks, on the balustrades, urns, and obelisks, as well as the sculptured seating. A few areas, such as borders around wall panels and rusticated grooves on piers, were finished by using chiselled forms in order to heighten the articulation of the composition by contrast.

“The exposed aggregate concrete was first used to construct the immense double retaining wall along Sixteenth Street. In this case, the concrete was poured in place, starting at the northern end of the park. On the first parts of this wall, it is possible to find areas where the aggregate is not universally distributed, and is sparse. Following the construction of the wall, the process was further refined to provide greater coverage and more even distribution of evenly graded aggregates. The arched entrance-way on Sixteenth Street, which is flanked by rusticated pilasters, and surmounted by a complete entablature, and the adjacent open stairway were constructed shortly thereafter. Parts of the entryway were poured in place; the pilasters were precast. The decorative niches at the northern end of the park were poured in place in one pouring and present four different textures in close association. The technique improved with practice and the 300’ balustrade at the upper terrace was poured as an extensive, monolithic structure.

“To achieve variety and richness, other techniques were also used. Mr. James W. Mann who was associated with the firm of Charles H. Tompkins, major concrete contractor for Meridian Hill Park, described other concrete textures in an undated memo:

3 Correspondence about Meridian Hill’s concrete consistently refers to it as “scrubbed” concrete, referring to the technique developed for cleaning the portland cement off the face of the aggregate.

"Texture 1. A trowelled surface shall be used for top and drip of wall coping, for back of post joints and for top of base; matching work now in place in 15th Street wall.

"Texture 2. A tooled surface shall be used for panel border; matching work in place in 15th Street wall.

"Texture 3. A fine aggregate surface shall be used for moulded coping, balusters, and panelled piers, for obelisks and vases; matching work in place on the niches of the Euclid Street wall.

"Texture 4. A coarse aggregate surface shall be used for the panel centers and for bases of walls; matching work now in place in 15th Street wall panels.

"Texture 5. A crushed stone aggregate surface shall be used for walks within the park walls; matching the cross walk at the point of joining.

"(Memo. Meridian Hill Park. James W. Mann. [These textures are also listed in the article by James W. Mann for Concrete International, October 1979 titled 'Meridian Hill Park — circa 1916.'])

"The pathways required special attention. Here it was found that crushed stone provided a better surface for walking, particularly with high heels or thin soles. Pebbles were used, however, for borders and between panels where they served as design elements, and also to discourage roller skating. The path colors are vivid and include red quarry tile, and black crushed trap stone."⁴

The General Specifications for "the construction of a retaining wall along the west (16th Street) side of Meridian Hill Park between W and Euclid Streets N.W." dated February 1, 1915, provide a few clues about methods and materials used for the park's concrete:

"III. Materials

"*Gravel* for panel surfacing shall be clean, rewashed, and about three-sixteenth inch in diameter.

"*Broken Stone* must be of granite gneiss, limestone or other suitable stone of a durable quality....It must be of such size as will pass a one-inch screen....

"*Cement* must be a standard brand of Portland cement....It must conform to the U.S. Government specifications for Portland cement.

"IV. Construction

"*Forms*....Concrete backing of panels shall be left in rough shape with enough exposed broken stone to furnish a good bond for ground coat.

"Walls and Piers shall be of reinforced concrete; proportions of mixture to be 1 part cement, 2 parts sand and 4 parts broken stone."

Frederick Cron, author of *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful*, has a slightly different take on both attribution and the development of the concrete techniques used at Meridian Hill than that presented in the HABS document. John Joseph Earley, born in 1881, was just twenty-five in 1906 when his father died and he took over the family architectural sculpture business with his father's assistant Basil Taylor. Cron continues Earley's story:

"After the founder's death, the work of the Earley Studio assumed a new direction, and under John Earley and Basil Taylor it became primarily a plaster and stucco firm.... The U.S. Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was building a public park in the newly fashionable Meridian Hill residential section of Washington. This park, designed by Horace Peaslee, Architect of Public Buildings and Grounds, was an elaborate neoclassical composition of retaining walls, stair cases, balustrades, reflecting basins and formal gardens. To save expense, all of the masonry construction was to be of concrete, with a stucco finish. The Earley Studio was engaged to do the stucco work.

"Before proceeding with construction, the contract required that a full scale sample wall be made for the approval of the architect and the United States Fine Arts Commission, of which the celebrated architect Cass Gilbert, Sr., was then chairman. The sample wall was duly cast and stuccoed, but it did not satisfy the Commission which pronounced the flat gray color drab and uninteresting.

"Earley then made another wall, casting the piers against plaster molds to produce deep rustications in the concrete, and giving a rough pebble dash finish to the stucco panels between the piers. The result was a rougher texture with strong contrasting highlights and shadows, and a better overall appearance, but the wall still had the cold gray color of portland cement.

"Cass Gilbert then suggested that an acceptable finish might be produced by imitating the pebble mosaics he had seen in Italy...made by pressing pebbles of various colors into mortar while it was still plastic. Earley was sure he could produce such a finish, but he knew the labor cost could be far higher than the projected budget would allow: also, he was not sure whether the pebbles would stay in place under the action of freezing and thawing. John Earley then had a brilliant inspiration. Why not produce a pebble finish using the pebbles already in the concrete mix? These had been dredged from the Potomac River, then the principal source of concrete aggregate for Washington, and were yellowish-brown in color. However, for the pebbles to show, the gray paint-like covering of portland cement would have to be removed, and this could be done easily only before the concrete had set into a hard stone-like mass. Earley solved this problem by stripping the forms while the concrete was still "green", or not fully set, and then exposing the larger pebbles by removing the still-soft surface sand and cement with wire brushes. (This technique was not new, or original, with Earley. As early as 1907, J.H. Chubb of the Universal Portland Cement Company had demonstrated on a small scale that attractive concrete surfaces could be produced by exposing the aggregates while the concrete was still green and then washing the

surfaces with dilute acid.⁵ It is doubtful, however, that Earley knew of Chubb's work in 1916 when he was building the Meridian Hill Park walls.)

"The result was astonishing. Instead of the cold gray cement color the wall glowed a creamy tan — the natural color of gravel. In Earley's words:

'This method of treating the surfaces at once supplied the sense of strength and size that was lacking before. This wall was no longer a plastered one, but was reinforced concrete and nothing else, and it seemed big and strong enough to meet all the demands that would be made upon it. A change took place in color. The surface which had been wholly a cement gray, was broken in spots by clean pebbles in their natural color, which varied from white to yellow, to light brown. These spots relieved the gray of the cement to such an extent that they imparted to the whole structure a cream color which was a great improvement and a decided step forward.⁶

"Earley coined the term 'architectural concrete' for this new finish. It was enthusiastically approved by the Fine Arts Commission, but it had its own faults. The worst was a tendency for the pebbles to bunch into pockets surrounded by areas of gray sandy mortar, which gave a blotched non-uniform appearance to the wall. However, Earley thought he could overcome this defect by further experiment, and with characteristic vigor he set out to solve the problem. First, however, he needed to know more about concrete as a material, and here he was fortunate to be able to draw on the experience and knowledge of experts at the Bureau of Standards, which was then the leader in cement and concrete research.

"At this time, in 1916, comparatively little was known about the chemical and physical properties of concrete, and how its various ingredients interacted with each other, even though large quantities of concrete had been used in engineering works for over a century. A serious student could learn practically all that was known about concrete in a few months of intensive reading, and this is exactly what Earley did. After these studies, he sensed that the problem of non-uniform appearance was, somehow, tied up with the proportioning of the ingredients in the concrete mix.

"The specifications for Meridian Park called for a 1:2:4 mix: that is, one part of cement to two parts of sand and four of gravel, measured by volume. This was practically a universal formula for structural concrete in the United States at that time. Furthermore, the sand and gravel were required to be "uniformly graded", that is, composed of several sizes of particles, such that each successively smaller size filled the spaces between the particles of the next larger size. The tiniest spaces between the smallest sand particles were filled by the finely pulverized cement particles. Figure 1 is a simplified picture of a uniformly graded concrete in which the various sized particles are distributed evenly through the mix. However, such even distribution did not always occur in practice and it was then possible for the

5 J.H. Chubb, "Artistic and Commercially Practical Surface Finishes for Concrete Work" *Engineering Record*, April 3, 1907, p. 415

6 John J. Earley, "Some Problems in Developing a New Finish for Concrete" *Journal of the American Concrete Institute, Proceedings*, Vol. 14, Detroit, Mich., June 1918, p. 128

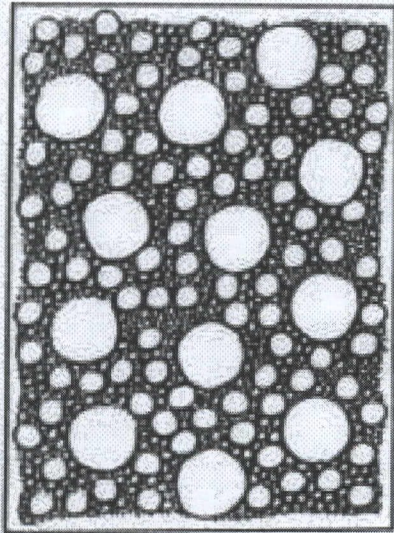


Fig. 1. Uniformly Graded Mix, With Particles Well-Distributed

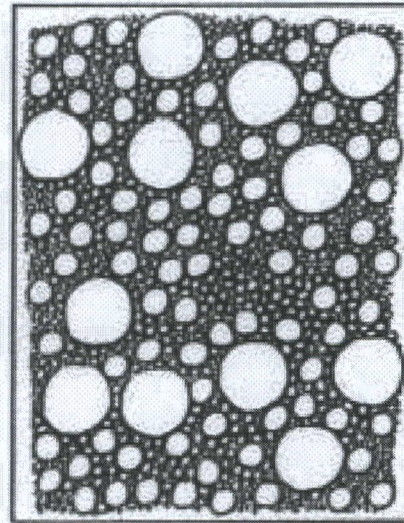


Fig. 2. Uniformly Graded Mix With Particles Bunched In Pockets

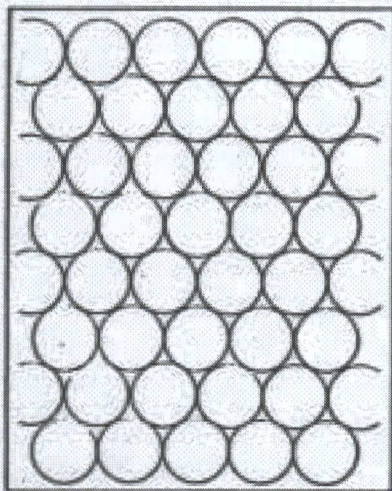


Fig. 3. Spheres On A Flat Surface

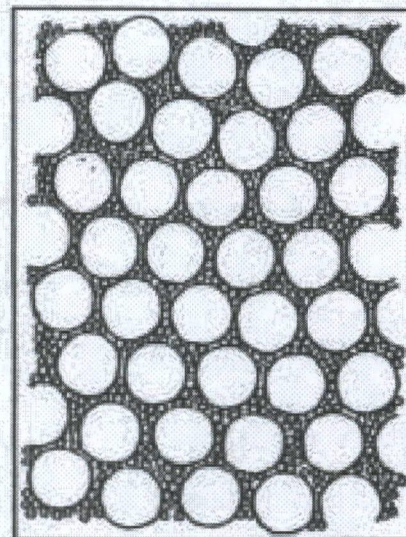


Fig. 4. Step-Graded Mix Of Two Particle Sizes. Ratio Of Particle Diameters Is 10:1

various sizes of particles to collect in pockets each containing one or two sizes, as in Figure 2. When the surface was exposed by brushing, the pockets gave the wall a blotchy appearance.

“From elementary geometry, Earley knew that if spheres of one size are arranged on a plane surface so that each sphere is touching its neighbors an absolutely uniform surface will result, as in Figure 3. Why not, he reasoned, use gravel pebbles that were all the same size and then add just enough sand and cement to fill the spaces between them? By experimenting in his studio with many different combinations of sand and pebbles Earley eventually hit upon a mix using only one size of pebbles, and one size of sand particles in which the ratio of the particle diameters was 10 to 1 (Figure 4). This mix gave the desired uniformity, and also the greatest face area of pebbles when the aggregate was exposed by brushing. (Many years later Earley stated that these early experiments with so-called “step-graded” mixtures of aggregates had been influenced by the work of the French engineer R. Feret. However, Feret was interested in mixes that would give the greatest density and strength, while Earley was seeking uniformity in appearance.⁷)

“With the improvement in the mix, the Earley Studio was able to complete hundreds of square feet of walls with practically no segregation or bunching of the aggregate. However, Earley and Taylor were faced with still another problem when they tried to cast the balustrades. Instead of being cast in place these were precast in the studio and then cemented in place by the masons after they had hardened and cured. The railings of the balustrades were not difficult to cast and finish because they were rather simple in shape. The balusters, however, were quite another story. As with the walls, the balusters had to be demolded while the concrete was still “green” in order to wire-brush the surface and expose the aggregate. But when Earley’s workmen removed the molds chunks of concrete stuck to them, causing ugly pits which ruined the balusters. This bond between the green concrete and the molds was not true adhesion but, rather, a suction caused by a vacuum developing between the concrete and the form. The green concrete had insufficient tensile strength to overcome this suction. This problem had never arisen before because no one, in all history, had tried to demold complicated concrete casings while they were still green and weak. This was, however, small comfort to the Earley Studio, which was losing four out of every five casts.

“Earley now drew on his recent experience with the Bureau of Standards stucco experiments for guidance. The base coats of the most successful stucco panels had been somewhat porous and were only slightly dampened before the finish coats were applied. When the finish coats were laid on, some of the water in the fresh mortar was drawn into the porous base. This immediately stiffened the mortar and caused it to set much more rapidly than it would have on a non-absorbent base.

“The concrete now used to cast the balusters had to be somewhat wet and fluid in order to flow into and fill the complicated molds, and therefore it contained more mixing water than

7 John J. Earley, “On the Work of the Committee on Architectural Concrete of the Exposed Aggregate Type and the Thomas Alva Edison Memorial Tower” *Journal of the American Concrete Institute*, Proceedings, Vol. 34, Detroit, Mich., 1938, p. 600

was needed to accomplish the chemical set, or hydration, of the cement in the mix. But after the concrete was in place in the molds, this water was no longer needed and served only to slow the set and weaken the concrete. Earley reasoned that if he could, somehow, remove a part of the mixing water from the concrete after it was in the mold, the casting, like the stucco finish coat, would set faster, and thus have sufficient strength when green to overcome the suction of the mold. The handiest absorbent material was ordinary newspaper, so Earley had his shop men pile folded newspapers on the freshly-filled molds. The papers acted as a blotter and were soon soaked by water drawn out of the concrete by capillary action. Earley then had the men pile fine sand on the newspapers, and it too became saturated.

"This treatment was completely successful. So much free water was drawn out of the fresh concrete that the balusters could be demolded without injury and balustrade was completed without further incident...

"For John Earley, Meridian Hill Park was the beginning of an involvement with concrete that was to last for nearly 30 years. Eventually, he became the world's foremost expert on the practical aspects of concrete making, and under his direction the Earley Studio executed works of such unusual complexity and beauty that they have never been equalled."⁸

As the exposed aggregate concrete construction progressed, it was continually refined and improved. In a report on Meridian Hill Park, February 20th, 1918, to Col. C. S. Ridley, Officer in charge, Public Buildings and Grounds, Horace Peaslee reports on the park design, including the concrete:

"A New Decorative Concrete, adaptable to an architectural form, has been one of the main developments of the work to date. The steadily improving character of the general concrete work may be observed by a comparison of the high walls north and south of the entrance recently completed; and between the rustications of the entrance with those of the posts in the lower wall; but the chief advance has been the use of a new form of cast concrete for the cast cement work previously used for the finer moulded work; - as may be seen by comparing the balustrade on the upper wall with the cornice directly below it or with the balustrade insert in the lower wall.

"...This new texture has been developed by Mr. Earley, *the contractor for the work* (emphasis added), along lines indicated in a report made by the architect under date of August 20, 1916, reading in part as follows:

'The completion of the balustrade on the upper wall has been held up at my request until I could investigate the possibility of obtaining a new finish for the moulded work, - of changing the dead effect of the cast cement work to a more colorful harmony with the live concrete surface...'"⁹

8 Cron, pp. 7-12.

9 Horace Peaslee, pp 3 and 4.

By August of 1916 construction had been underway for more than eighteen months, yet Peaslee is still experimenting and trying to improve effects in the concrete work.

After Meridian Hill Park, Earley continued to work with decorative concrete techniques. By 1935 his knowledge of decorative concrete together with a desire to provide affordable housing led him to experiments in prefabricated concrete panel construction where he used brilliantly colored bits of glass to achieve richly colored panels with borders and designs. The five houses he built using prefabrication techniques that reputedly involved the newspaper method for rapid removal of water from the concrete after it was poured, are known as the "Polychrome Houses."

By January 1923 the specifications for the "shelter and temporary park lodge for Meridian Hill Park" say:

"28. MIXTURE. - Mixture shall be composed of one part cement, two parts sand and four parts gravel, by volume,...

"IV SURFACE CONCRETE

"36. EXTENT. - The surface concrete shall include the 1 inch mortar finish on the floor within the footings and the scrubbed surface finish on all other exposed portions of the concrete structure.

"37. FLOOR SURFACE. - The floor shall be topped with a 1 inch layer of mortar composed of sand and cement, mixed in the proportions of two parts cement to three parts sand, by volume. This surface concrete shall be applied while the base concrete is green and before it has attained its initial set. Master Builders' concrete hardener of equal shall be worked into the surface and troweled to a smooth finish, having the desired drainage. Borders, as shown on drawing 157-1 to have scrubbed finish as described in paragraph 38.

"38. STRUCTURAL FINISH OF STRUCTURAL MEMBERS. - All exposed concrete surfaces of the permanent structure shall have a fine grained aggregate exposed by scrubbing and washing, corresponding to the work in the niche motifs of the wall along the north side of the park. This surface shall be constructed integral with the structural concrete. Results shall govern rather than methods, except that no methods shall be employed which will involve structural defects. Attention is specially directed to the requirement that the surface shall present a uniform distribution of the aggregate with cement mortar matrix having minimum exposure.

"Immediately upon award of contract, samples shall be prepared with surfaces, mixes and methods accurately determined, to insure uniformity of production and these samples shall be approved by the contracting officer before any of the work involving this type of surface concrete shall be begun.

"39. MATERIALS...

“(c) Aggregate. - ...Sizes and kinds are not specified for the reason that the finished surface must match in detail the work already in place, as described in paragraph 38.”

In another specification for “work...in the central part of Meridian Hill Park,” dated February 23, 1923, the concrete work for walks is described thus:

“II. BASE CONCRETE.

“26. DESCRIPTION. - The base concrete shall include all of the sidewalk base and shall have a uniform thickness of 4 inches...

“27. MIXTURE. - The mixture shall be composed of one part cement, two parts sand and four parts gravel, by volume; thoroughly and uniformly mixed...in a machine mixer of approved type for a minimum of 2 minutes after placing in the mixer. The mixing shall be sufficiently thorough in all cases to insure a uniform consistency and such as will permit proper placing in the forms.

“28. POURING. - The pouring shall begin immediately after the concrete is mixed and shall continue rapidly. If ingredients should become separated in transfer, the concrete shall be remixed, but retempering will not be permitted. The base concrete shall be thoroughly compacted by ramming.

“29. JOINTING. - The walk base shall be laid off in blocks approximately 2 feet 7 1/4 inches square, separated by sand joints. The type of sand joints used shall meet the approval of the contracting officer. Expansion joints approximately 1/2 inch in width shall be provided at approximately 60 foot intervals. These expansion joints shall be filled with an approved bituminous expansion joint material.

“III. SURFACE CONCRETE

“30. DESCRIPTION. - Surface concrete shall include the 1 inch scrubbed concrete finish on all visible surfaces.

“31. COMPOSITION. - The finish required shall match in appearance, color, and texture, the short steps in the northwest corner of the park and near Euclid Street. Large and small aggregate shall be so proportioned that no sparse cement areas will be left exposed. Results shall govern rather than methods except that no method shall be employed which will involve structural defects.

“32. APPLICATION.- The surface concrete shall be mixed in a machine mixer of approved type for a minimum of 10 minutes after placing it in the mixer. It shall be applied while the base course is green (and before it has attained its initial set) and floated to a true grade, free from humps, hollows, waves and other defects.

“33. SURFACE. - Before mortar is set hard, the surface shall be gone over with brushes and scrubbed. Approximately 2 weeks after pouring, the surface shall be washed with a solution of muriatic acid strong enough to remove the mortar skin and bring out the natural

colors of the aggregate without weakening the bond. Special care must be taken to avoid patches where cement is removed.

"Clean cut joints shall be made over all sand joints in the base. These joints shall be similar to those in the existing adjacent walks.

"34. CURING. -To insure proper curing of the pavement, the concrete surface shall be kept continuously wet for a period of two weeks after being poured, by a method approved by the contracting officer.

"35. SAMPLES.- Bidders shall cite the location of similar work constructed by them, or prepare and submit samples showing their ability to properly execute the work...

"IV. MATERIALS...

"37. CEMENT. - Cement shall be a brand approved by the contracting officer and the contractor shall furnish sufficient evidence to show that it has been tested by the Bureau of Standards or by a recognized commercial testing laboratory and that it conforms in every respect to the United States Government specifications for Portland Cement published in Circular No. 33 of the United States of Standards, effective January 1, 1921.

"38. SAND. - (a) The sand used in the base concrete shall be composed of hard sharp grains, and of size and gradation approved by the contracting officer. It shall be clean and free from loam, clay, decayed rock, mica, leaves, chips and other foreign matter. (b) The sand used in the surface concrete shall be a fine white sand, of size and quality satisfactory to the contracting officer, and shall be clean and free from loam, clay, decayed rock, mica, leaves, chips and other foreign matter.

"39. GRAVEL. - Gravel shall be clean, rewashed, free from foreign matter shall be chemically and physically stable. It shall be well graded, and sizes shall be limited by screens passing 1 1/4 inch aggregate and retaining 1/4 inch aggregate.

"40. BROKEN STONE. - Broken stone shall be clean, rescreened, free from dust and foreign matter and shall be chemically and physically sound. Sizes and kinds shall be such as meet conditions prescribed under "Surface Concrete" and are not specified, for the reason that the finished surface must match in detail the work already in place, as stated in paragraph 31."

This system for pouring the walks in two layers is consistent with other installations of early twentieth century walks, apparently poured in two layers but with no cold joint between the layers such as would result if the first pour had cured. Note that the sand specified for the finish layer is white sand. Also, no particular gravels for aggregate are specified suggesting that the beige pebbles used may have been the standard gravel available at that time.

In his 1979 *Concrete International* article on Meridian Hill, James Mann, a vice president with Charles H. Tomkins Co., describes Earley's process of exposing the colors of various aggregates in concrete by removing the haze of portland cement. He also says "On the Meridian

Hill Park project, the mixture of structural concrete was spelled out. Specifications required a mixture of one part cement, two parts sand, and four parts gravel with hydrated lime equalling 10 percent of the cement by volume.”¹⁰

He continues to quote specifications as saying “The contractor’s procedure and methods of construction may be of his own selection, provided they secure results which satisfy the requirements of the plans, specifications, and supervision.”¹¹

In a letter to Paul Goeldner, Chief, Historic Resource Services, NCR, NPS, dated May 20, 1981, Mann says,

“I’ve enclosed my article on Meridian Hill Park written for Concrete International October 1979. We have the 1929 contract and specifications and some additional photographs other than those used in the article. Other records are sketchy, and, for the most part, simply list the job number from which I was able to approximate the dates of construction of the various contracts.

“Interesting stories have been passed down by word of mouth. I believe part of our contracts were joint venture with Earley wherein he supplied the precast concrete and Chas. H. Tompkins Co. cast the architectural concrete in place. There is no record that we ever did any precasting and I do not believe Earley did any of the cast-in-place architectural concrete.

“One story is that Horace Peaslee wanted certain colors that were not in the Potomac River gravel so he had bottles broken and the glass embedded in the sidewalks. This can be seen today in Meridian Hill Park.”¹²

“Tompkins used one bag mixers so only a few cubic yards of concrete could be placed each day. Metal dividers were used with one mix placed on one side and a different mix on the other side. As the pour progressed, the divider was raised.”

The 1929 specifications mentioned by Mann in his letter are the only example we have of using hydrated lime as part of the portland cement. This may be a result of continuing experimentation to perfect methods by the various people working on the park.

In an October 1940 article in *Landscape Quarterly* Peaslee further describes the refinement of construction and use of concrete in the park.

“Further details could be given of the various divisions of textures and material, such as a slightly brushed surface used for top of balustrade, seat copings, drips, washes, etc.; a fine

10 Mann, p. 85.

11 Mann, p. 86.

12 This appears to be an error on Mr. Mann’s part. There is no evidence of broken glass used for color at Meridian Hill Park. He may have confused Earley’s use of glass at the Polychrome Houses with the park.

aggregate used for decorative urns; a medium aggregate for molded copings, balusters, and panels; a coarse aggregate for pier and wall panels.

"It would seem that all this general specification might not lead to the desired results, or might limit the field of available bidders. As a matter of fact, although this work was originated with the experimentation of one Washington contractor, the knowledge of the process has spread so that a number of men are available for bidding, and each seems to be able to improve upon the preceding work.

"The generalities indicated above might be supplemented by a few specific formulae: for example, that for the coarse aggregate the range of material used is between 1/2 inch and 1 1/4 inch,¹³ - everything excluded below or above these sizes. The proportions of mixture will range from one of cement, one of sand, and three of aggregate, to one of cement, one and one-half of sand and four of aggregate. For balustrades and finer molded work, everything more than 3/16 inch is eliminated. Walk aggregates range from one-eighths inch to five-eighths inch, with a common mixture of 1:1:3.

"The coarse wall textures were well under way before it was felt that it would be possible to get the same sort of treatment in the finer molded work. However, after considerable experimentation it was found that delicately molded balusters could be obtained with as sharp arrises and of structure to resist park wear and tear. As soon as this was definitely determined, there was no limit to the possibilities for color and texture, and the newer molded work is on a very high plane of execution...

"Interesting experiments have been made in the development of walk surfaces. It was found that a crushed aggregate made a better surface than gravel for high heels and thin soles, although gravel in various sizes has been made use of for borders and lining. Crushed limestone was satisfactory for texture, but void of interest for color and trying to the eyes because of its glare. Crushed trap has been much more satisfactory, although difficult to obtain of sufficient blackness in the Washington area. Crushed quarry tile has been introduced in the walks to add a note of color and break up the glare of large areas. This tile, introduced variously in trap, limestone, and gravel, produces strikingly different effects, and works well for checkerboard or border patterns."¹⁴

Production of acceptable test panels to demonstrate that the contractor was able to achieve the results desired by Peaslee was clearly an important part of the contracting process at Meridian Hill Park, referred to by Peaslee, Earley, and Mann. An October 19, 1927 photograph in a *Washington Times* piece titled "Work is Resumed on Meridian Park—Paradise Being Constructed After Let-Up of Several Years" shows Horace Peaslee in front of some concrete sample panels and is captioned "Horace W. Peaslee, architect,...is shown examining one of the 28 examples of concrete submitted by contractors...."

13 Peaslee references a minimum aggregate size of 1/2" in his 1940 article and the 1923 specification requires a minimum size of 1/4". This discrepancy may be a result of further refinement of the specification or may be an error in Peaslee's memory.

14 pp. 31-32.

This reliance on results and the production of acceptable test panels instead of relying on explicitly spelled out materials and procedures handicaps contractors attempting to repair or replicate the concrete today. It would appear that a similar process of experimentation until the desired result is achieved should be used to procure concrete work at the park today.

While all the above is probably not sufficient to determine methods and materials to replicate or repair the concrete work at Meridian Hill Park, certain facts emerge that could provide valuable directions for investigation:

- aggregate size
- the use of two very different aggregate sizes instead of the usual “well-graded” range of aggregate size
- possible addition of lime to the concrete mix
- pouring of walks in two immediately successive pours
- use of a fairly wet mix and then the removal of water from the concrete once it is in the form
- the “scrubbing” process
- tooling the green concrete in selected locations immediately upon removal of forms
- use of white sand for finish pour on walks
- details on mixing time
- details on form removal and curing of the concrete
- the concrete pouring method using dividers within the form, alluded to by James Mann and described by Lori Aument¹⁵

The master’s thesis by Lori Aument, just complete in the spring of 1999, provides extremely helpful details about the concrete work in the park but there was not enough time to include its findings in detail.

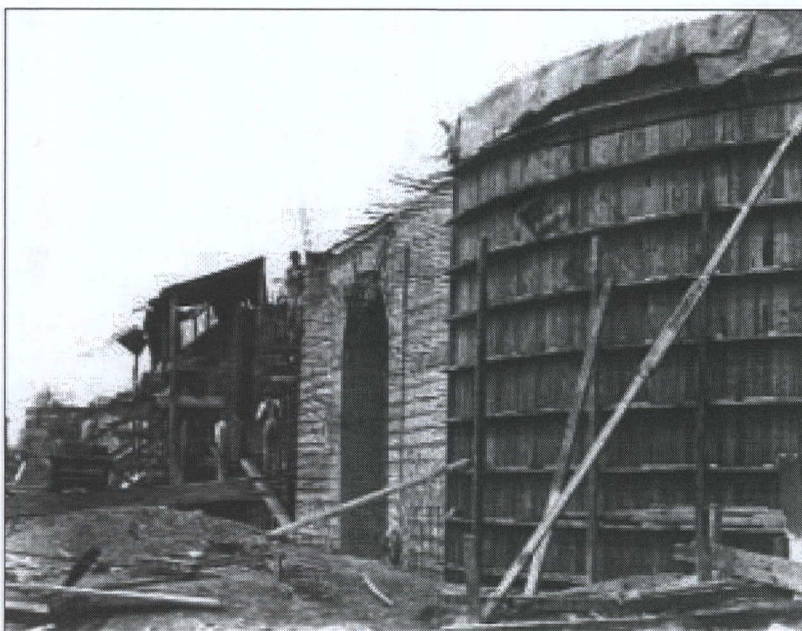


Figure 125a: Southeast corner of great wall during construction (RCP-CRF, c. 1929-1930).

15 Lori Aument, “Experimentation in Concrete: John J. Earley at Meridian Hill Park, Washington, DC History, Technology, and Characterization of Exposed Aggregate Concrete.” Master’s Thesis in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania. 1999.

3.5.1 Lodge

Construction of the lodge began in 1923 and was completed the following year. It was first referred to as “a comfort station,” then as a “shelter and temporary park lodge.” The single-story structure, approximately 14’ x 44’ in size, has square exposed aggregate concrete columns with a flat, wood-beam roof (see figures 126 to 130). A low, exposed aggregate concrete retaining wall, approximately three feet in height, runs the entire length of the rear of the structure. The center portion of the lodge housed a Park Police office. Men’s and women’s restrooms occupied either end of the structure with high windows providing ventilation. In 1936, the center office was removed and replaced with an open-air seating area (see figures 129 and 130). In 1993 the restrooms were removed and the lodge converted to an open-air pavilion (see figure 127).

While the pavilion is in good condition with new roof timbers installed in 1993, the overall structure little resembles the structure in place at completion of the park in 1936.

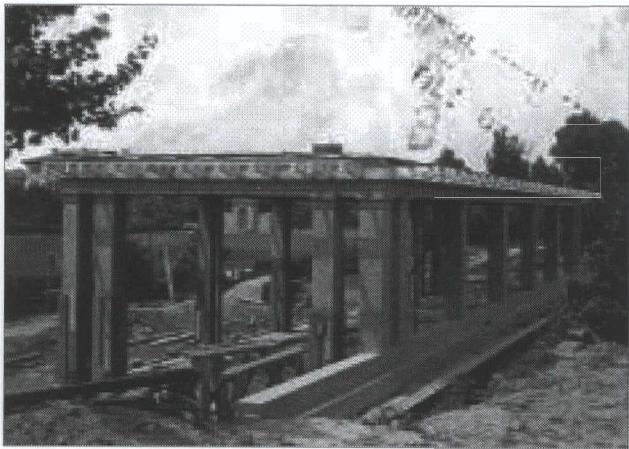


Figure 126: The lodge under construction circa July, looking northwest with the back retaining wall in the foreground. 1923 (RCP-CRF).

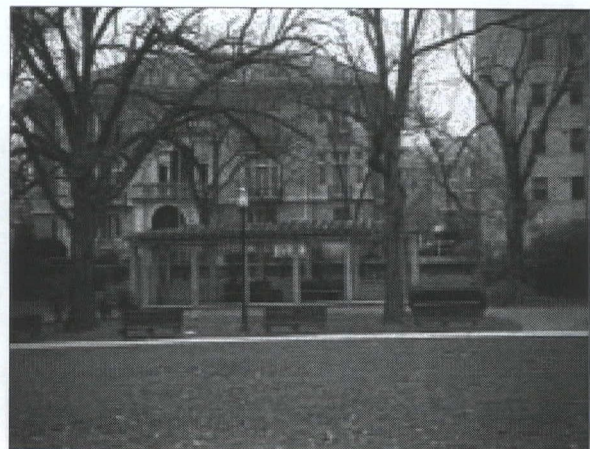


Figure 127: The pavilion, 1996 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

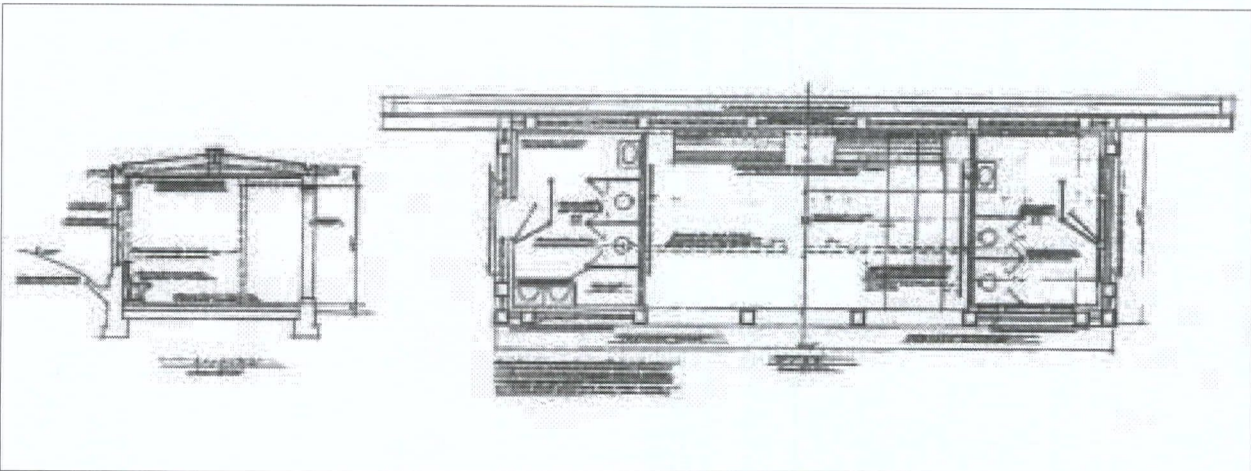


Figure 128 : Renovation plans for the lodge showing removal of the Park Police office in the center of the structure, circa May 13, 1936, prepared by the National Park Service, Public Works Federal Project No. 664, Contract No. T-1P-4013 (National Archives RG 79, no drawing number)

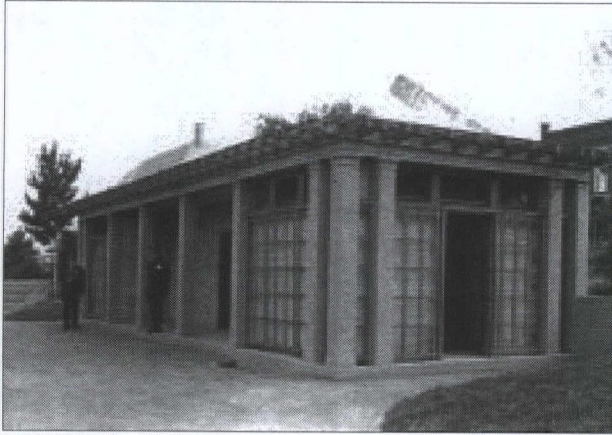


Figure 129: Lodge prior to 1936 renovation (RCP-CRF no date).



Figure 130: Lodge after 1936 renovation to remove park police office from center section (RCP-CRF, September 21, 1936).

3.5.1.1 Underground Spaces

The spaces under the great terrace stairs and at the base of the cascades are original to the park. However, as utilitarian spaces not part of the contributing aesthetics of the park, their significance is in the role they fill housing essential operational aspects of the park, such as the pump, piping, weir boxes, and valves for the fountains. As such, these spaces are discussed only briefly in this report.

There are some interesting minor architectural elements associated with these spaces. Board doors with decorative studs on their exterior surfaces provide access to the spaces under the great terrace stairs. A number of openings are protected by heavy ornamental iron. The doors to the spaces flanking the base of the cascades are fabricated of three layers of oak and cypress boards, are edge-banded with copper, and originally had copper louvers in them.

Under the Great Terrace Stairs

Early in the design of the park, extensive useable spaces were included under the great terrace. In 1929, however, built space under the great terrace was reduced to the area under the stairs to allow more room for the roots of trees planted on the great terrace above. Ultimately, restrooms, a park police office, storage spaces, and some service spaces were built in the spaces under the stairs. Water leaks into these spaces from the walking surfaces above.

Ventilation and overall habitability in these spaces has always been problematic and is cited in the engineering reports of 1966 and 1977. This is partly understandable in the context of the time of construction: the 1920's were the very early years of use of mechanical ventilation. Basically, the art and science of motors, fans, and pumps was being invented.

The spaces today continue to be used for restrooms, storage, maintenance operations, utilities, and to house some fountain functions. Even the current reduced use of these spaces should

probably be further restricted as the restrooms are old, in need of upgrading, and are inaccessible to persons using mobility aids. They cannot with any practicality be made accessible.

Flanking the Base of the Cascades

The underground spaces at the base of the cascades are used largely for plumbing systems related to the fountain. The east space houses the 50 hp pump for the fountains and the system reservoir. There is a transformer vault room serving the park's electrical systems off the pump room. This space is under the jurisdiction of PEPCO and the NPS does not have access to it. The west lower storage room provides access to several fountain valves, is traversed by some piping serving features on the east side of the base of the cascades, and is used for storage.

3.5.2 Water Features

a. As-Built

The fountains at Meridian Hill Park have been individually described, as they were constructed, in the history section. They are presented here in photographs and graphically (see plan sheet 27.)

At the time of the construction of the park, the systems for operating the fountains were touted as innovative. Unlike the Italian hill garden fountain systems that were operated by gravity flow from streams diverted at their tops and allowed to flow through a controlled system of fountains, the Meridian Hill Park fountains relied on city water supply, recirculation, and pumps, along with gravity.

The park fountains were studied in 1966¹ and in 1977², at both of which times repair recommendations were made, some of which were done as many more of the fountains are operating today than in 1966.



Figure 131: View of the reflecting pool shortly after construction of the cascades, showing eight fountain jets in operation (RCP-CRF, no date).

This CLR does not include an engineering analysis of the fountain operating systems. Such an analysis should include interviews with NPS staff who have been operating the Meridian Hill

- 1 Cobb and Youssef, copies of a draft version of the report with the original photos and the final version of the report with drawings are at RCP-CRF.
- 2 Symphonic Fountains. Copies of correspondence about the study, a copy of an outline specification for repairs to the fountains, both of systems and the concrete, and existing conditions drawings are at RCP-CRF.



Figure 132: View of the temporary illumination of four fountain jets at the reflecting pool (MRCE

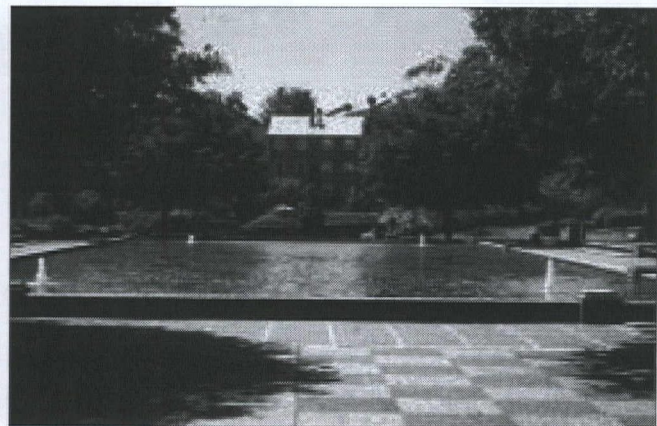


Figure 133: 1996 view of the reflecting pool with four fountain jets (Land Ethics, Inc.).

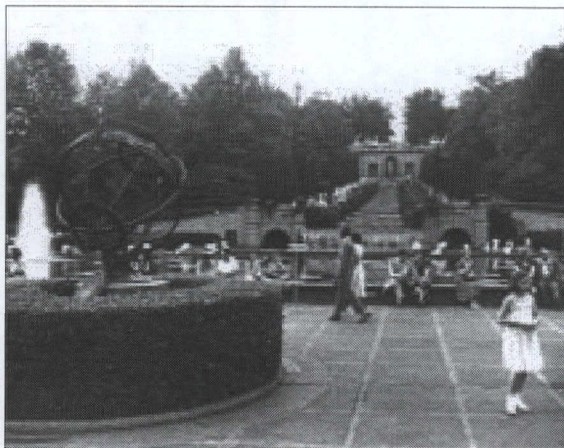


Figure 134: The cascades circa 1949 (RCP-CRF, July 3, 1949).

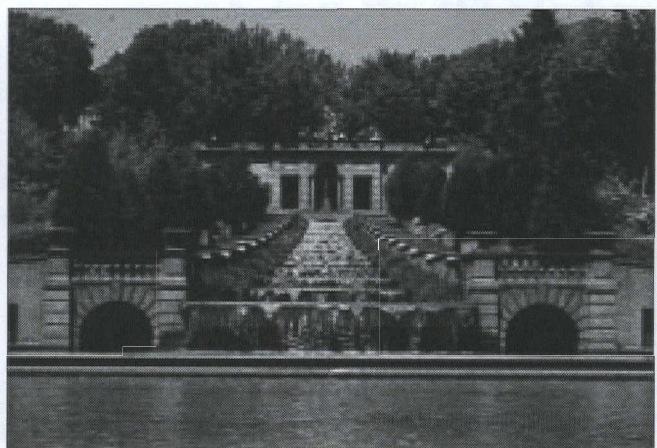


Figure 135: Thirteen individual basins form a graceful cascade of water flowing from the base of the great wall to the lower plaza, 1996, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

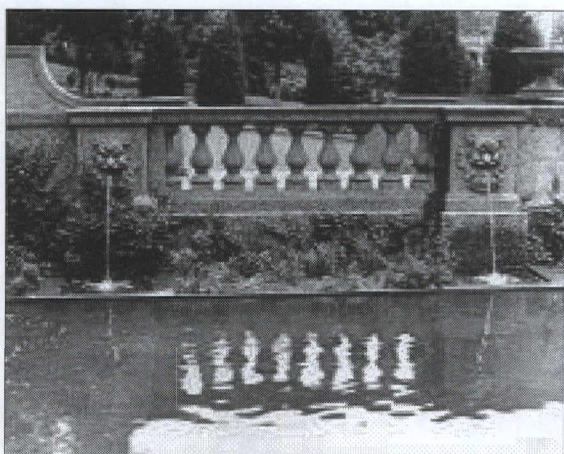


Figure 136: Grotesque mask spouts spray water into the bottom basin of the cascades (MRCE, June, 1938).

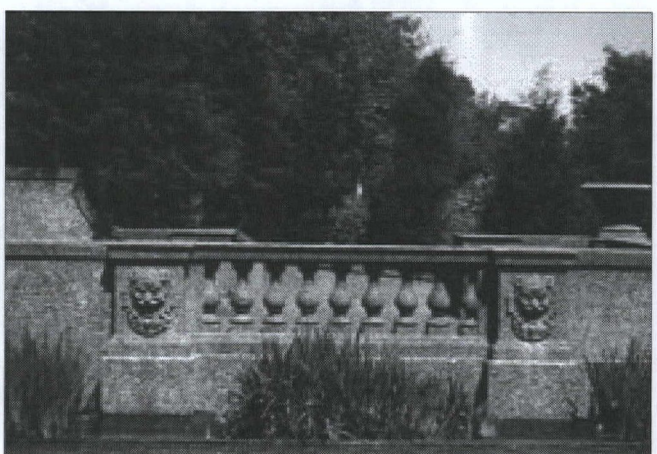
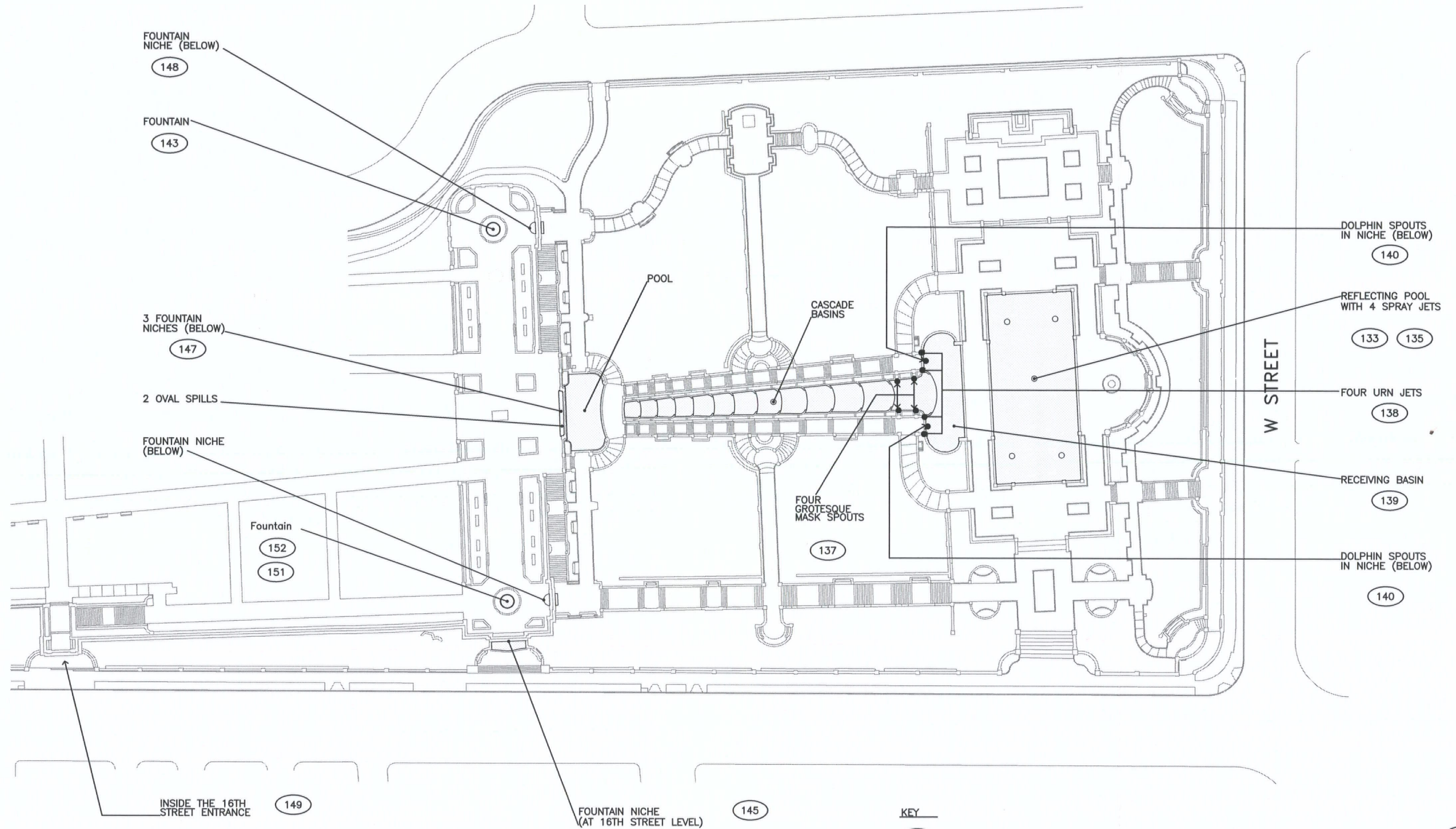


Figure 137: Grotesque mask spouts, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service – National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

WATER FEATURES

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 27

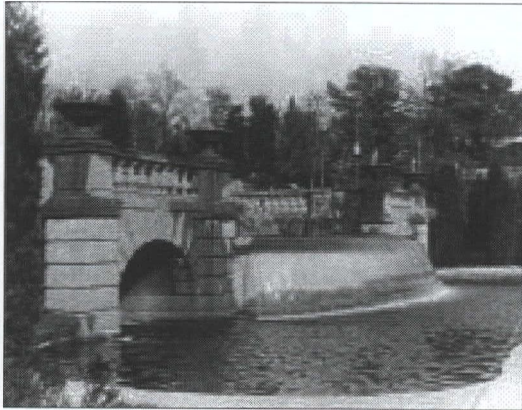


Figure 138: Circa 1936, note heavy and uniform flow of the lowest cascades basin and the wetness on the urns (RCP-CRF).

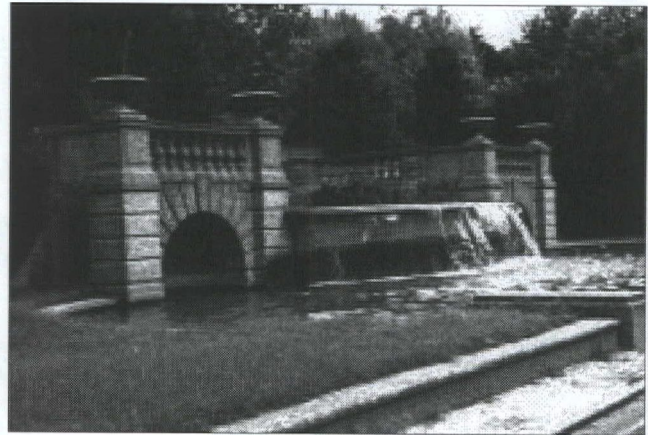


Figure 139: Four urn mounted jets on corner pillars at the base of the cascades, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 140: Wall mounted dolphin spout in niche at the base of the cascades, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

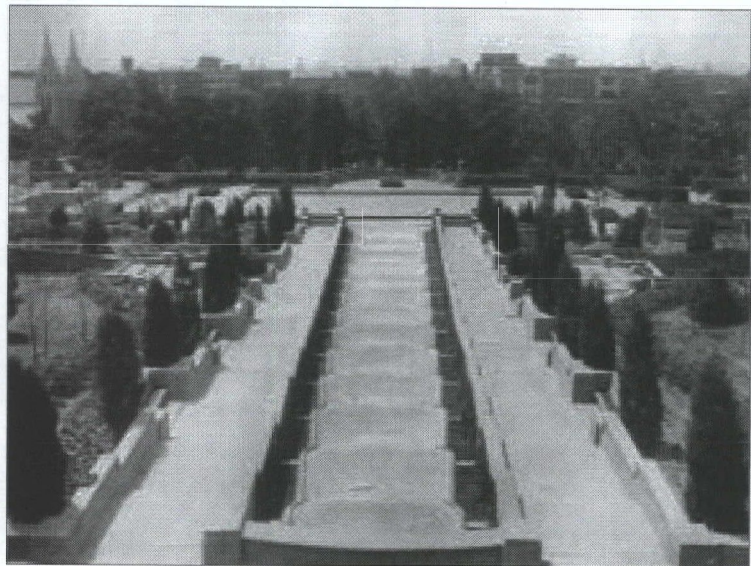


Figure 141: The cascades appear as an optical illusion when viewed in perspective. Although wider at their terminus at the lower plaza, they appear to be uniform in width and shape when viewed from the great terrace (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).

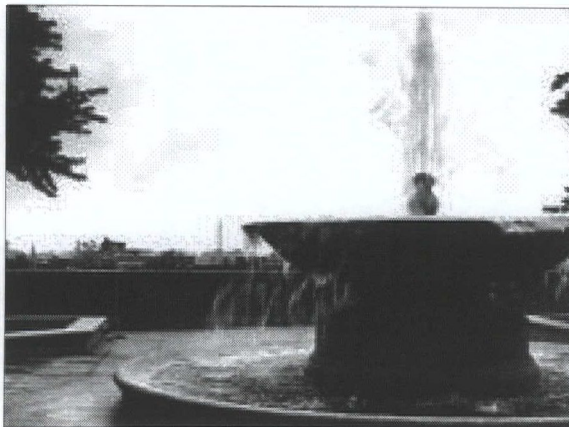


Figure 142: Large fountains at the east and west ends of the great terrace have center jets and large circular receiving basins (RCP-CRF, c. 1936-1944).



Figure 143: Fountain on the great terrace circa 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 144: The 16th Street Niche featured a towering center column of water with three shell overflows (MRCE, June, 1938).

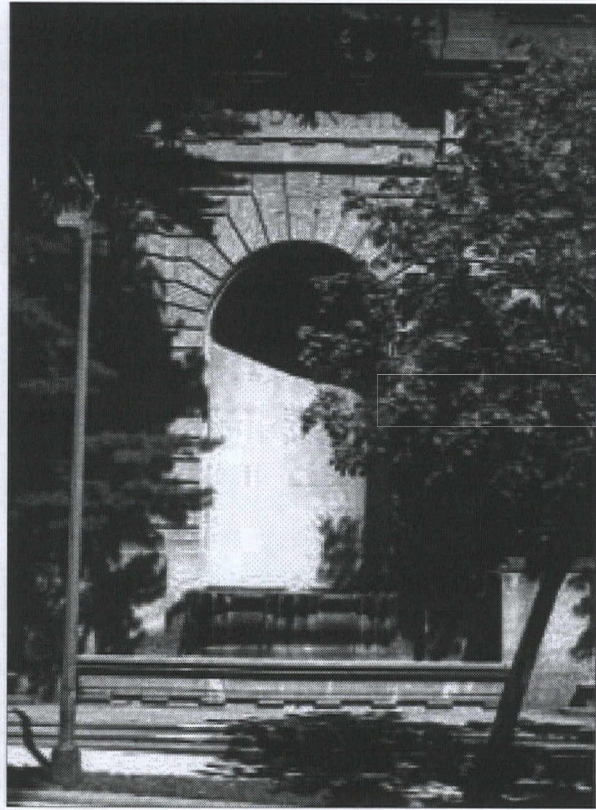


Figure 145: The 16th Street Niche, 1996, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Park fountains. Various park personnel have reported anecdotally that there are broken pipes precluding operation of some fountains; that pipe constrictions and/or pump operation will not allow all the fountains to work at once; and that the entire system today requires careful tinkering and adjustment of valves to divert or direct water to get jets and good flow in various locations.

Comparison of historic photographs of the fountain jets with contemporary views show smaller jets in all cases. Obvious losses include the missing basin lip at the fountain in the main 16th Street entrance, various non-functioning elements, and the broken lip at the western great terrace fountain.

Following is the Cobb and Youssef 1966 description of the fountain operating system:

“Existing Distribution:

“The circulating water system is the system responsible for the supply of water to the reflecting pool, the water cascade and all display fountains and consists of the main circulating pump, the receiving reservoirs and the related distribution piping.”

“The pump:

“...The pump receives its water from a water reservoir located in the Pump Room, and discharges its flow into a network of distribution piping that in turn delivers that water



Figure 146: Fountain niche in the great wall (MRCE, c. 1945).

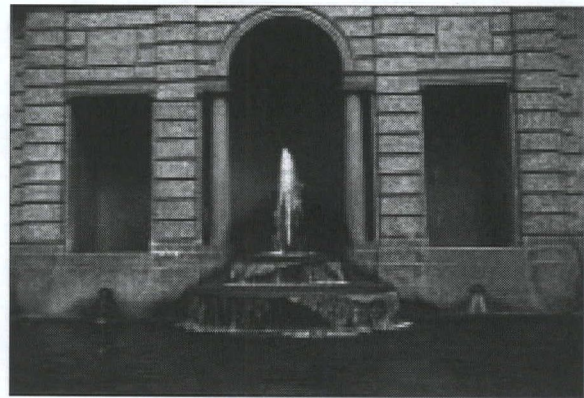


Figure 147: Fountain niche in the great wall, 1997, with oval spill basins and large receiving pool (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 148: Decorative wall-mounted shell bubbler, 1997, in the great wall, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

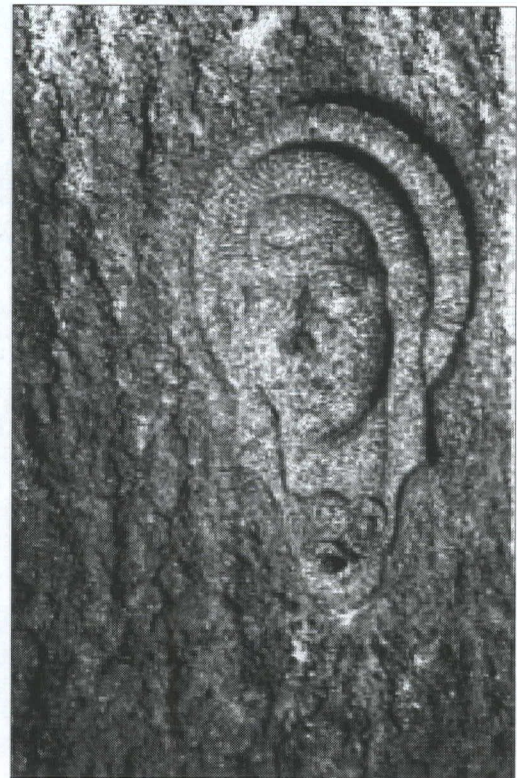


Figure 149: Sculptural wall-mounted fountain mast at fountain located at the base of the stairs in the main 16th Street entrance, 1997. The entire lip of the receiving basin for this feature is missing. (Land Ethics, Inc.)

to the reflecting pool, the fountains and the water cascade. To complete the closed circuit water is then returned back by means of a gravity return piping system to the water reservoir.”

“The reflecting pool:

"The pool is located in the lower part of the park to the South of the water cascade. The initial design of the pool called for a three inch water line originating from the circulating pump discharge and supplying water to four fountain heads within the pool. Today, the fountain heads are removed, the ends of the pipes capped and the pool is not being used as a fountain."³

"The pool drain line runs from the bottom of the pool to the receiving reservoir in the Pump Room. A valved by-pass line is, however, available between the pool drainline and a ten inch stormdrain line that allows the complete drainage of the pool."

"The water cascade:

"The cascade is located in the area between the High Terrace and the Reflecting Pool...The cascade consists of a series of fourteen [sic] basins constructed...with the smallest basin at the top and the largest at the bottom. Water is supplied to the cascade at the smallest basin and is allowed to flow continuously into it. When this basin is filled, the water is then deliberately allowed to overflow into the next larger basin below it. A similar succession takes place there and after thirteen similar steps the water finally reaches the lowest and largest of the basins. Through a drain in that last basin, water is either returned to the Pump Room reservoir or directly drained into the existing storm drainage system as the operation may demand. Two main supply and drain lines are provided and run the whole length of the cascade and are individually connected to each of the top fourteen basins to enable the filling or draining of each basin independently of the others. During the normal operation of the water cascade the valves connecting each basin to the supply and drain line are normally closed and the main flow of water in the cascade is supplied by gravity from a group of retention tanks that collect their water from the fountains at the High Terrace."



Figure 150: Deteriorated wall cap at the northwest corner of the reflecting pool, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

"The Pump Room Reservoir:

"All the water in the circulating system serving the reflecting pool, the water cascade and the fountains is finally being returned to a central reservoir in the Pump Room. The purpose of the reservoir is to maintain a water storage capacity for the operation of the circulating system, provide a point in the system ahead of the pump suction for settling impurities in circulating water, serves as a point at which water treatment, through the addition of chemicals as well as dyes, could be accomplished and functions as a receiver of the make-up water required to offset the

3 The initial design had eight fountain jets, reduced to four fairly early (see figure 132). The pool today (1999) has four operating fountain jets.



Figure 151: Efflorescence or mineral deposits on the west fountain on the great terrace 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

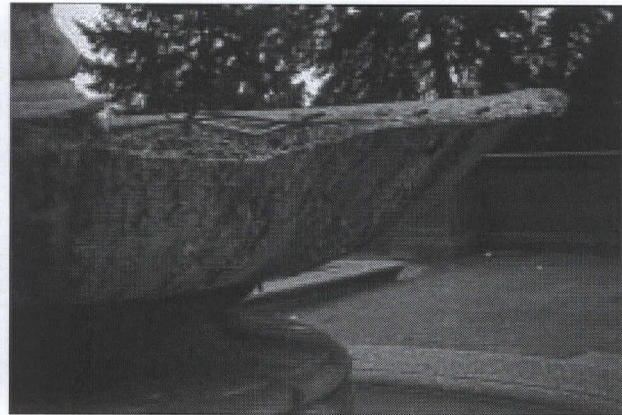


Figure 152: Missing exposed aggregate concrete, 1997, on the fountain lip, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

losses in the system. The reservoir consists of four separate compartments. One compartment receives return water from the reflecting pool and water cascade and is provided with a mesh screen filter. The second compartment receives water from the side fountains at the High Terrace as well as the two fountains on 16th Street. The third compartment connects to the park storm drainage for disposal of excesses in the circulating water system. The fourth compartment serves as the circulating pump suction reservoir and is equipped to receive chemicals for water treatment as required. The latter compartment is also provided with screen gates at two sides to allow the flow of return water to that compartment and in the meantime intercept large suspended matter from entering the pump section. A submersible pump is also provided at the bottom of the fourth compartment and is only operated when required to drain the reservoir into the storm drainage system.”⁴

“Problem Areas...Underground piping:

“Section [sic] of the existing underground piping that could be visually examined in place were found to have accumulated sediment that was restricting the water flow in the system.”

b. Existing Conditions

All of the water features in the park are capable of operating today except the ones at the 16th Street level of the main 16th Street entrance and the one in the great wall at the top of the east ascent. In the first case, the receiving basin is missing; in the second instance the water supply pipe is compromised. Other water features such as the four urn jets, the dolphin spouts, and four grotesque mask spouts are capable of operating but are not turned on on a regular basis because of several problems.

4 Cobb and Youssef, p. 24-26.

The Lower Plaza

See section 3.3 Topography for settlement issues related to the lower plaza reflecting pool.

The reflecting pool is in fair condition. Some of the pool's expansion joints leak. Many of the recessed lights cast into the wall of the pool also leak, especially when the water level in the pool is at or above its designed level. Segments of the reflecting pool containing wall are badly damaged with reinforcing exposed (see figure 150 and plan sheet 38). Of eight original spray jets in the reflecting pool, only four remain; one in each corner. It is not known when the other four jets were removed, although no historical photographs after 1939 show eight in operation.

The Hillside Gardens and Cascades

The cascades pools remain in excellent condition although many of them splash into their adjoining planting pockets. The thirteen individual basins have not shifted, settled, or cracked, and water flow remains smooth over the lip of each basin, although decreasing in volume down the cascades. While the grotesque mask spouts and dolphin spouts are all operational, portions of the mask spouts and the exposed aggregate walls are discolored. The grotesque masks, feeding the dolphin spouts by gravity, are typically turned off because of a leak from the northeast spout's reservoir into the pump room. The dolphin spouts cannot operate unless the grotesques are on. The four urn jets set on the balustrades at the base of the cascades are also operational but are typically turned off because they overflow as their drain lines are undersized relative to the inlets.

The Great Terrace

The two large fountains on the great terrace are both operational. However, the west fountain is badly damaged on one side, with a large section of the lip of the upper basin missing and with heavy efflorescence (see figures 151 and 152, and plan sheet 39). This fountain will continue to deteriorate as water flows over the lip. The fountain on the east side of the great terrace is intact and in better condition. Both fountains on the great terrace suffer from uneven settling of their bases. The result is that the basins on both fountains are slightly tilted, causing the water to flow unevenly over their edges.

All three fountain niches in the center of the great wall below the terrace are functioning. However, the one shell bubbler on the west end of the great wall below the terrace is out of service. In addition, there are signs of water seepage and efflorescence on the wall surfaces (see plan sheet 39). The fountain in the niche facing 16th Street is operating and the two receiving basins are in good condition with the exception of some efflorescence on the wall surfaces.

The Mall

The single wall-mounted spout within the 16th Street main entrance is no longer operational. The low walls of the receiving basin are gone with reinforcing exposed.

3.5.3 Walls and Fences

Although a relatively small urban park, the design of this site incorporates an incredibly rich vocabulary of constructed elements. Although almost entirely limited to exposed aggregate concrete for material, the forms taken by that material are extensive. Early in the park's construction, its designers were primarily concerned that the extensive retaining walls convey a sense of strength. Indeed, the final form of the park with its terraces and graduated slopes, the wall of the great terrace as dramatic punctuation in the progress of the site downward, was only possible with retaining walls on all four sides of the site and within the park. The learning curve in the use of exposed aggregate concrete is visible as one moves south within the site. Paving in the upper park, the first section completed, is relatively simple, whereas the paving in the last-completed sections of the hillside gardens along the cascades includes extraordinary patterns, colors, and mature exuberance in the use of the material. The benches in the upper park, while not installed until very late in the construction of the park, are straightforward freestanding benches, albeit beautifully considered and with supports of exposed aggregate concrete. In the lower park, benches assume a diversity of forms and types, some simple backless benches, others curved concrete with high arched backs, taking full advantage of the plasticity of the material.

The walls of the site reflect a similar richness in concept and development. They are used to retain earth; to terminate axes (like the niches at the northern termini of the mall walks); to retain earth while also forming spaces (like the main 16th Street entrance and the great terrace wall); to edge (like along the cascades and at the southern end of the mall); and to edge and provide seating (like at the raised planter beds on the great terrace, at the sand play areas, at the reflecting pool). Some of Meridian Hill's walls are capped with copings; others with exposed aggregate concrete balusters. All the walls are constructed of beige pebble exposed aggregate concrete. Smaller aggregate is often used to frame panels of larger aggregate in the walls, often with troweled borders at the large aggregate panels.

Subtle differences in architectural scoring, color, and size of aggregate pebble are found throughout the park. While some of these differences are intentional, some of the differences reflect the continuing refinement of concrete methods used at the site.

Fences

The original design of the site had only one fence: that on top of the retaining wall on the north edge of the site at Euclid Street (see figure 161). Early in the development of the park, it was planned to locate the French embassy north of Euclid Street, facing the park. Meridian Hill Park was thought to provide a glorious foreground for the building with the embassy building providing a fine terminus for the park. Thus, the open fence would allow views between the park and the embassy.

Later, low iron fences were added around the northeast corner play area and behind the hedge at the benches along the Linden Allee. These fences may have been standard NPS fences of the era, as identically configured ones are found at other public parks in the city, such as at Fourth Street and Massachusetts Avenue, NW.



Figure 153: Low seat walls frame the sides of the cascades, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 155: The west ascent circa 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

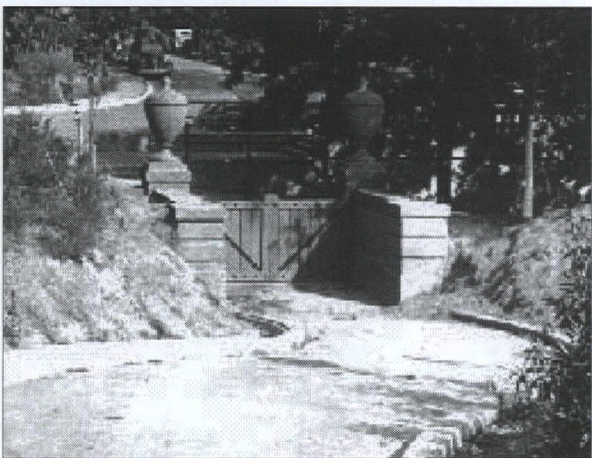


Figure 157: The lower 15th Street maintenance entrance, circa 1936, featured solid wooden gates (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).



Figure 154: The walls at west ascent, circa 1931, had a high stepped wall on the left side and low, ground-level runners on the right, edged by continuous hedges planted later (RCP-CRF, c. 1931).



Figure 156: The lower terminus of the east ascent, circa 1936, featured walls without the rustication as found on the west ascent (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).



Figure 158: Exposed aggregate balustrades in the wall overlooking the 16th Street niche, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

See plan sheet 28 for locations and configuration of the walls and fences in the park..

a. As Built

The Lower Plaza

Low seat walls were used around the reflecting pool, at the outer border of the plaza around the reflecting pool, at the rectangular plaza at the Buchanan Memorial, and at the four crescent-shaped children's sand play areas at the west end of the lower terrace.

The exedra south of the reflecting pool was defined with exposed aggregate balustrades, alternating with three sections of molded seat wall. Large obelisks on pillars were positioned at both ends of the exedra apse. Similar to the exedra, exposed aggregate balustrades were used to detail the entire length of the low wall along W Street in addition to the short sections of curved wall at the southeast and southwest entrances of the park.

The Hillside Gardens and Cascades

Low walls frame both sides of the cascades, descending its entire length in a regular stair-step progression (see figure 153). The west ascent also used a similar progression of stepped wall sections, but only on its west side; the east side had a low curb in front of the hedge separating the ascent from the hillside gardens (see figures 154 and 155).

The lower terminus of the east ascent with its stepped walls has panels of exposed aggregate concrete rather than the rustication seen on the west ascent (see figures 155 and 156).

The 15th Street retaining wall returned into the site as two arms at the maintenance entrance across from Belmont Street. This entrance was flanked by covered urns in the park's brown and beige exposed aggregate, approximately four feet in height. Wooden gates limited entry to the park to maintenance workers (see figure 157).

The Great Terrace

A variety of low planter-walls (called "seating coping" on construction drawings), approximately 12" - 14" in height, were constructed on the great terrace to create the raised planting beds for the elm trees. Low walls with molded benches of beige pebble exposed aggregate, approximately four feet in height, separated the mall and the great terrace.

Exposed aggregate balustrades topped the wall overlooking the 16th Street niche and hillside garden-cascade area (see figures 158, 159, and 160). Recessed joints cast in the concrete were used throughout the park to create rustication, reminiscent of stone construction.

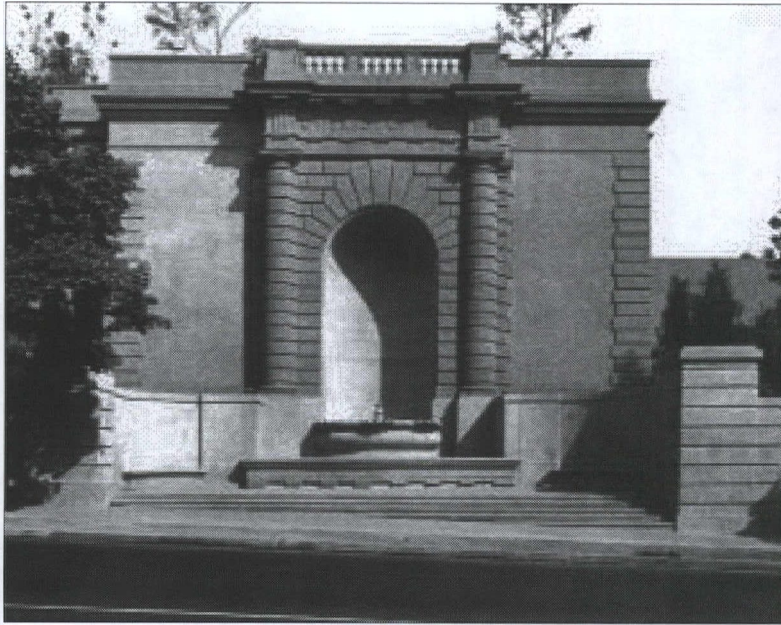


Figure 159: The 16th Street niche, circa 1936. Scoring in the exposed aggregate concrete creates rustication alluding to carved stone (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).

15th and 16th Street Retaining Walls

Retaining walls the length of the park, north/south, along 15th and 16th Streets, eliminated the considerable cross-slope between the two streets. (Compare plan sheet 17, Topography, with plan sheet 28 to see how the retaining walls allowed regularization of the site.)

The perimeter retaining walls were interrupted to form entrances at the upper end of the park in the northeast and northwest corners. The openings were framed by large rusticated exposed aggregate concrete piers (see figure 162).

The 15th Street retaining wall is relatively low, about four feet, along its length. The 16th Street wall, however, had extreme changes in grade to retain. One of the breakthrough ideas of the park's designers was to minimize the impact of what would otherwise have been a huge wall along 16th Street by building a relatively low wall at the sidewalk, sloping up behind that wall to a second, much higher retaining wall. The planting bed between the walls was densely planted with specimen trees and shrub masses that effectively screened the second, higher wall.

Both the 15th and 16th Street walls were constructed as panels, approximately 25 feet in length, punctuated by

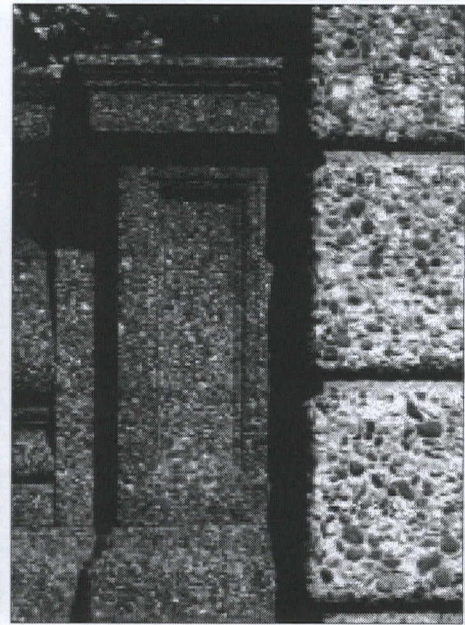


Figure 160: Exposed aggregate was used in various sizes. The work to the right in the photograph is unusually varied for the park and may be either replacement concrete or early in the park's construction before perfection of the construction techniques, 1996, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 161: Globe-shaped finials on the iron fence at the northern boundary of the park on Euclid Street, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

large piers, identical to those found at the upper entrances to the park (see figure 163). Between the piers, the panels are detailed with a large exposed aggregate center section, with the same colors as the pillars, framed in smooth concrete. This created relief in the panels in what would have otherwise been a uniform surface on each (see figure 164).

The main 16th Street entrance to the park had a tall arched opening into an enclosed stairway leading up into the park (see figures 166 and 167). Within this entrance, three runs of stairs ascended to the linden allee and mall. Rustication was used on the interior of this wall, consistent with the walls and pillars in this section of the park. Beige pebble exposed aggregate concrete balustrades were used along the top of the 16th Street entrance wall, and along the top of the high retaining wall at the linden allee (see figure 169). The walls around the wall-mounted water feature, (see figure 149), where Peaslee long wanted to install actual stalactites from Luray caverns, were instead textured to simulate water flow and mineral deposition.

Exposed aggregate concrete balustrades were also used in the wall at the 15th Street entrance to the park (see figure 170). At this location, six piers formed the base for two covered urns, approximately four feet in height, and four obelisks, approximately five feet in height, all of brown and beige exposed aggregate concrete.

Fencing

The park had fencing at three locations (along the northern boundary of the park along Euclid Street, at the northeast children's play area, and behind the eastern row of benches at the Linden Allee. This fencing was composed of a combination of cast and wrought iron and mild steel elements.



Figure 162: Rustication scoring on this pillar at the northwest entrance to the park simulated cut stone rather than exposed aggregate concrete, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 163: The boundary wall on 16th Street, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

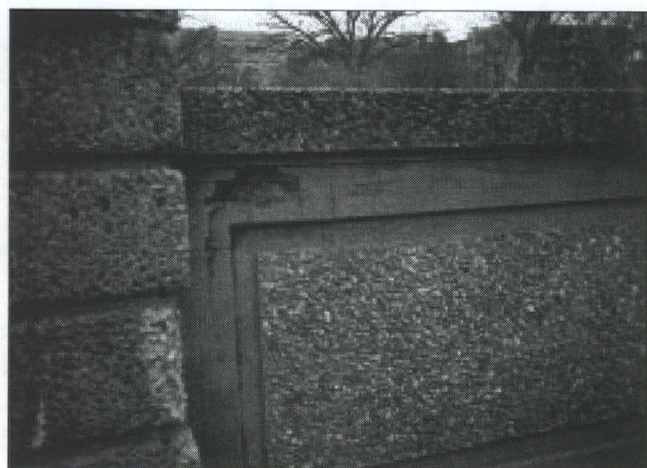


Figure 164: Exposed aggregate concrete detailing on the 16th Street boundary wall, 1997. Note the flat, trowelled borders to the exposed aggregate panels. See plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

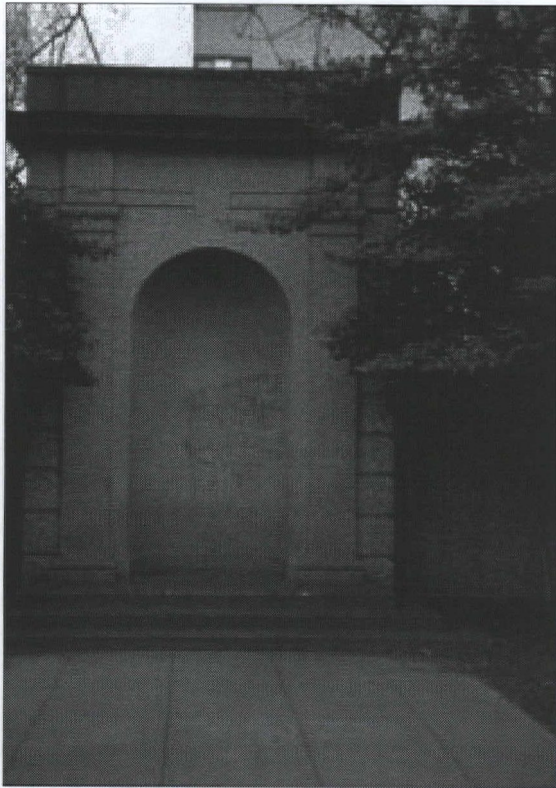


Figure 165: Wall niches on either side of the iron fence at Euclid Street, terminating the mall walks, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

At the northern boundary of the park, a low exposed aggregate retaining wall formed the base for an iron fence separating the park from Euclid Street (see figures 161 and 165). This ornately detailed fence had small globe-shaped finials at its intermediate supports. Two ornamental wall niches bookended the fence and provided northern termini for the mall walks. An iron fence, approximately 30" tall, enclosed the south and west sides of the play area located at the northeast corner of the park.

b. Existing Conditions

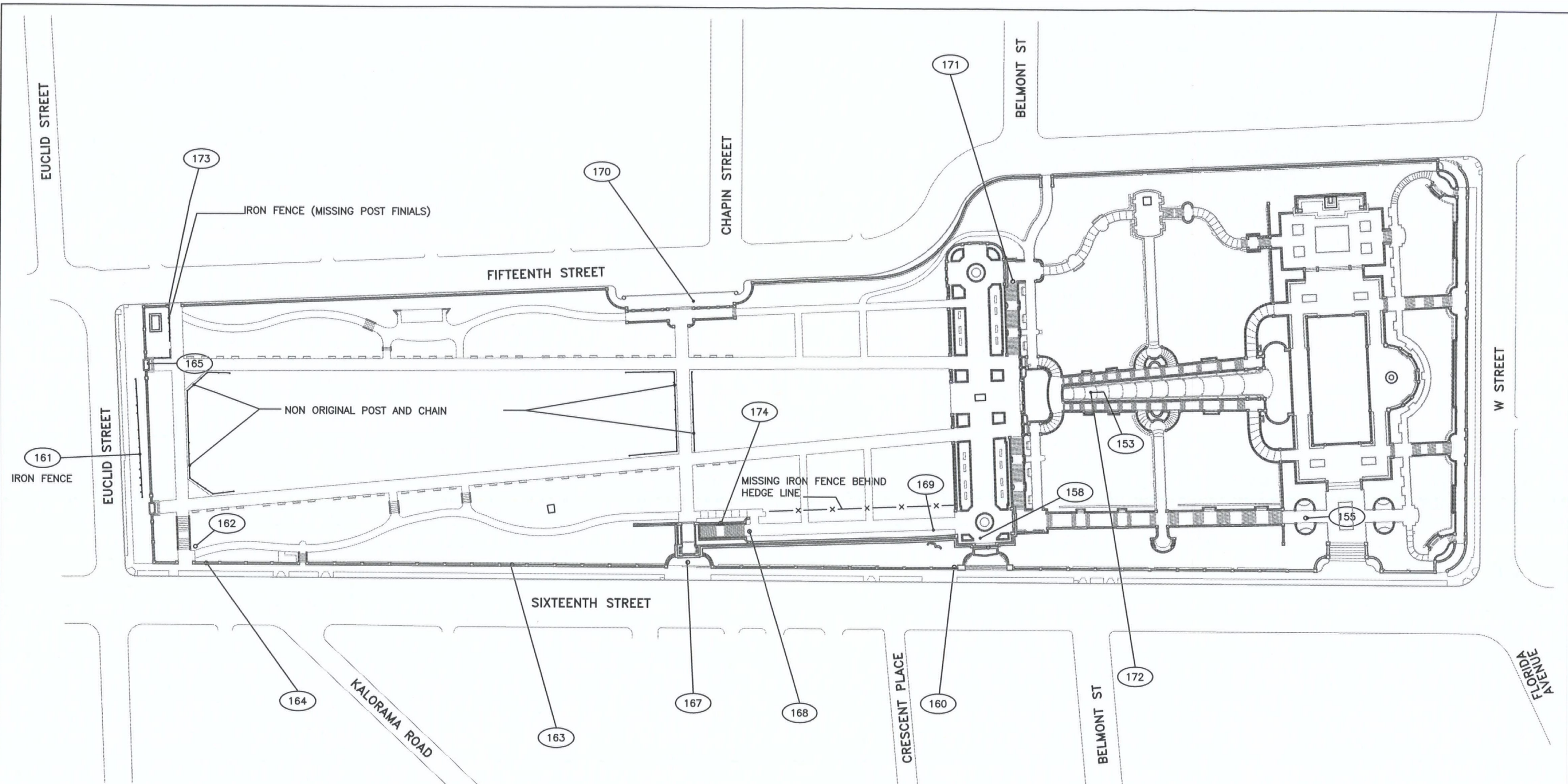
Many of the walls in the park are in good condition especially considering their age and the fact that concrete used this way was a new material. In a number of locations, reinforcement bars are visible where concrete has spalled or broken off. According to an article written by Peaslee in 1930¹, an effort was made to keep the reinforcing at least 1½ inches from the surface of the concrete. However, this did not always happen. In some locations, the bars were close to the surface, making them prone to corrosion,

causing the concrete to spall when the corroded steel expanded. This occurs throughout the park, but more often on the balustrades, urns and planters that are more likely to have reinforcing close to the surface (see plan sheets 38-41, Existing Conditions 1-4).

Another problem associated with the park's concrete is efflorescence. Efflorescence occurs when moisture in the concrete brings soluble salts from the concrete to the surface, leaving a powdery deposit on the surface as the moisture evaporates. Although not a significant structural problem, the efflorescence does have a negative aesthetic effect and is an indication of a continuing moisture problem and can ultimately weaken the concrete.

The following text briefly describes the existing condition of walls and fences in the four major areas in the park. See plan sheets 38-41 for specific locations of deteriorated wall sections. See section 3.3 Topography for discussion of settlement issues that affect walls such as that in figure 169.

1 Horace W. Peaslee, *Notes on the Concrete Work of Meridian Hill Park, Washington*. Landscape Architecture Quarterly, October 1940.



KEY

(155) FIGURE NUMBER

50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

DATE:
7-1-99

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DRAWN BY:
MACS

WALLS AND FENCES

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 28

The Lower Plaza

Six of the balustrades in the exedra are cracked and missing pieces of concrete. In addition, sections of the wall have separating expansion joints, located between posts and wall sections or balustrades and posts or wall sections.

Although the wall around the reflecting pool is generally in good condition, the northwest corner has some spalling with exposed reinforcing and efflorescence. The exposed aggregate concrete pillars flanking the sides of the lower 16th Street entry are also spalling with exposed reinforcing and efflorescence on the wall surfaces.

Sections of the wall framing the steps from the lower plaza to east/west walk above W Street are either cracked or spalling. The same is true at numerous locations on the wall paralleling W Street (see plan sheet 38, Existing Conditions 1, for exact locations of damaged wall surfaces).

A sphere from on top of the obelisk at the southwest entrance is missing altogether.

The Hillside Gardens and Cascades

The walls framing the cascades are generally in good condition, yet segments are spalling or are cracked and missing small pieces of exposed aggregate concrete. The same is true for sections of the east and west ascents, and 16th Street overlook (see plan sheet 38 and 39, Existing Conditions 1 and 2, for exact locations of damaged wall surfaces).

The Great Terrace

Many of the wall segments on the great terrace have deteriorated. This includes both the copings on the balustrades overlooking the hillside gardens and 16th Street as well as the low planter-walls. Uneven settling in wall sections, vertical and horizontal cracks, spalling on wall surfaces, exposed sections of reinforcing, efflorescence, walls separating at expansion joints, and broken or missing sections of wall are all common in this section of the park (see plan sheet 39 Existing Conditions 2, for exact locations of damaged wall surfaces). The uneven settling in the terrace pavement has contributed to this deterioration.

Efflorescence is visible on sections of the great wall. In addition, efflorescence has occurred on the side of the eastern pocket planting wall at the base of the great wall, perhaps as a result of interior water seepage from the planting pocket itself.

The 16th Street niche wall is in good condition with only a small section of fountain basin exhibiting signs of efflorescence. The area above the 16th Street niche contains a smooth concrete Meridian Hill name-plate in excellent condition.

16th Street Retaining Walls

The 16th Street walls are the oldest in the park and, considering that much of this work is now more than 80 years old, the exposed aggregate concrete has survived extremely well. In



Figure 166: The main 16th Street entrance to the park circa 1923 (RCP-CRF, c. 1923).



Figure 167: The main 16th Street entrance, 1997, see plan sheet 28. Note the DAR plaque on the right hand side of the entrance (Land Ethics, Inc.).

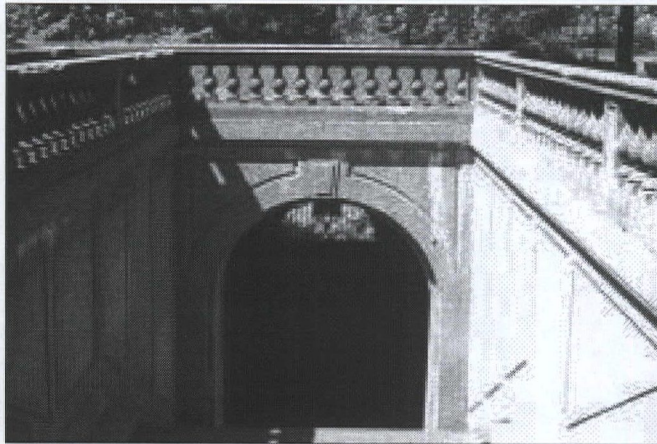


Figure 168: The interior walls of the 16th Street entrance, descending from the linden allee, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 170: The distinctive exposed aggregate concrete urns and obelisks at the 15th Street entrance to the park, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

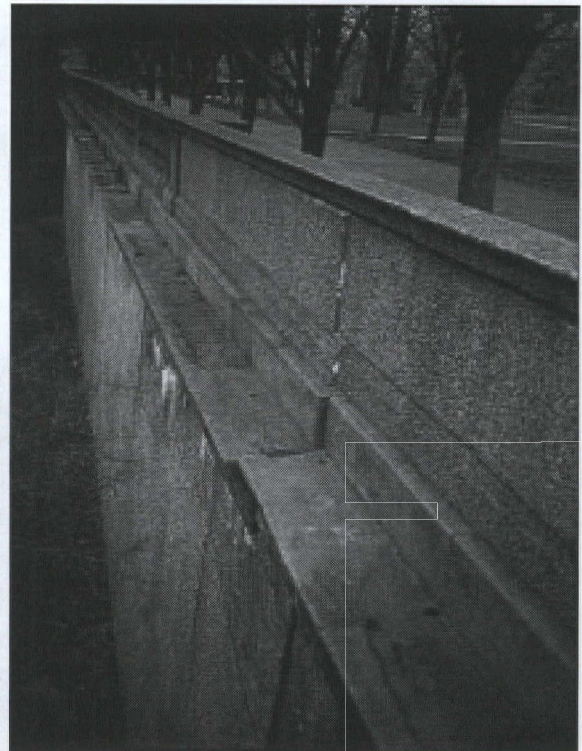


Figure 169: The high 16th Street retaining wall at the linden allee, 1997, (see plan sheet 28) showing location of possible continuing movement. See also figure 174 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 171: Efflorescence on the planting pocket at the base of the great wall below the great terrace, see plan sheet 28, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

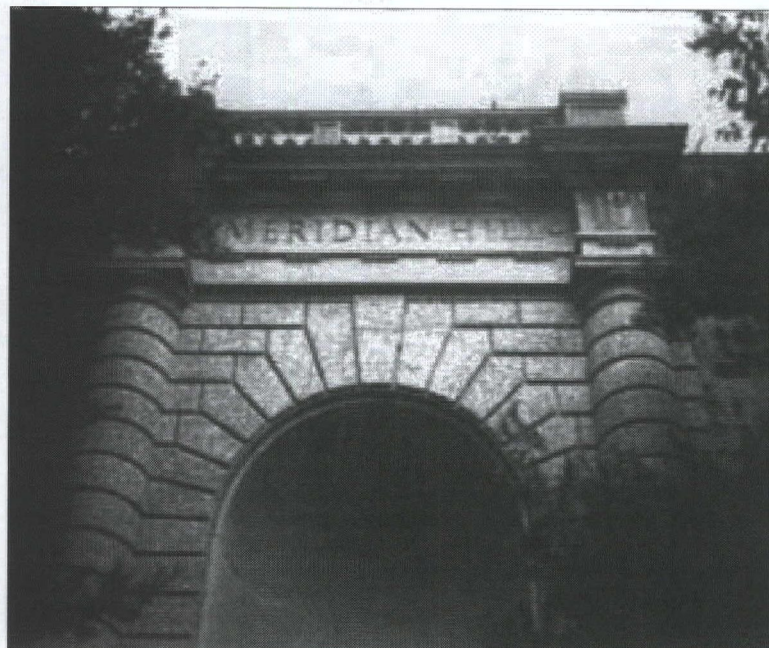


Figure 172: View of the 16th Street niche, showing Meridian Hill identification, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

some places, virtually no deterioration has occurred, yet in other areas, cracks in the wall surface, signs of water seepage, and efflorescence are all present (see figure 173).

In some areas where the park designers were experimenting with expansion joints at the time of construction, the walls have experienced some deterioration. This is evident on the lower retaining walls along 16th Street where fractures have occurred at the wall joints. These fractures are a result of inadequate provisions for lateral expansion where the wall panels connected to the piers. The same cracks can be found in each pier and wall panel joint. Later, expansion joint widths were adjusted, and subsequently constructed walls contain fewer, less predictable cracks

The high 16th Street retaining wall has for many years been separated at the expansion joints, causing large sections of the wall to deflect (see figure 169). A 1982 NPS project added dead-man tie-backs. Today, broad sections of the wall have efflorescence and spalling.

Sections of balustrade and rail coping at the overlook above the 16th Street entrance are badly damaged with deteriorated sections of balustrade, leaving the reinforcing exposed (see figure 174 and plan sheet 40 Existing Conditions 3, for the detailed locations of deteriorated balustrades and coping). A section of baluster, a console, and two urns are missing altogether from the lower retaining wall below the 16th Street overlook.

15th Street Retaining Wall

Much of the wall along the upper 15th Street section of the park is in good condition. The piers, urns, and obelisk at the 15th Street park entrance are all in good condition, although some sections of wall surface in this area exhibit signs of spalling with exposed reinforcing.



Figure 173: One of several piers in the park's enclosing wall that have a great deal of efflorescence and are seriously deteriorated. This one is at the entrance to the park by the upper play area. 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Traffic Control Elements

Bollards to prevent vehicles from using the entrance to gain access to the park have been installed at the 16th Street entrance.

The park has added sections of posts linked by chains at various sidewalk corners at the grass panels in the upper mall to control traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular.

Fencing

The existing fencing in the park, along Euclid Street and around the play area in the northeast corner is in generally good condition. However, several finials and points on the Euclid Street fence are either missing or require repair. The base of the fence has some areas of serious corrosion. The fence at the play area is missing some of its decorative elements and a number of its finials. The metal fence behind the benches lining the linden allee is missing altogether. It was removed in conjunction with the 1982 repairs in that area and never replaced.

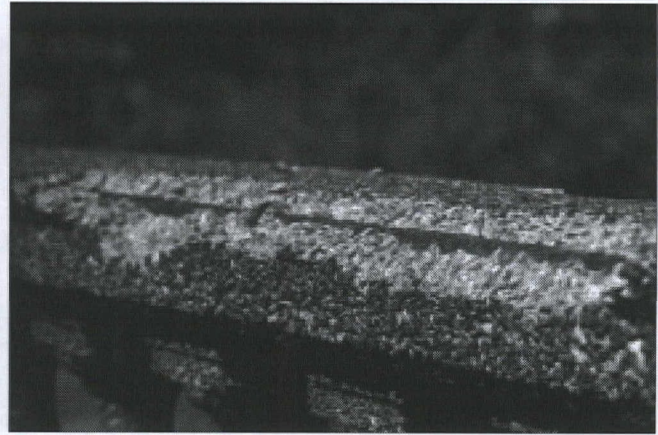


Figure 174: Section of top rail above the 16th Street entrance deteriorated with exposed reinforcing steel, 1997, see plan sheet 28 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 175: The sandbox bottoms and the areas between them and the adjacent walks, originally sand and gravel respectively, are now paved with red and blue non-original flagstones, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

3.5.4 Pavement

While the walls, balusters, and sculptural concrete features of the park are all round beige exposed aggregate with a few instances of flat tooled concrete finish, the paving in the park increasingly incorporated polychromy as construction proceeded. While the earliest constructed portions of the park were relatively straightforward crushed black trap softened by a small percentage of beige stone, with grids of expansion and control joints, paving from the great wall down to W Street has astonishing variety. Crushed and round aggregates are used. Scored grids vary in size and orientation with some rotated (see figure 176). Panels of one color of aggregate are bordered by one, two, and even three stripes of other colors and textures (see figure 177). Some square panels are separated by grids of large round pebbles. In the upper park, the paving is almost monochrome in black and beige. In the lower park terra cotta red is introduced in the form of crushed quarry tile. Panels of complex geometric designs of squares, circles, and stars are introduced using what appears to be crushed marble for greens, creams, and whites in the designs. Crushed grey stone appears often in the lower park. We don't know if this was intentional or an artifact of different contractors and different suppliers.

The two layer construction system used for the paving in the park may have allowed the use of very dense aggregate in the top, finish layer that we see throughout the park or may have been employed for economy or control of the final finish. Evidence of the actual use of this system, described in specifications, is apparent at several locations in the park where the paving has failed, notably at the stairs at the northwest entrance to the park.

Because so much of the original paving of the park is still in place, plan sheets 29-34 at the end of this section and accompanying photographs (figures 176-208) largely describe both the as-built and existing conditions of the paving. Plan sheets 38 through 41 identify and locate specific instances of paving failures. Only particularly unusual features or exceptions are noted in the following descriptions.

a. As-built

The Lower Plaza

Much of the surface paving for the lower plaza was completed by July of 1929 (see plan sheet 8, Construction 1928-1930 and plan sheet 34, Pavement 5). Pavement in this area of the park represented a significant departure from the predominant crushed black trap pavement and asphalt walkways in the upper park. Complicated patterns of multi-colored exposed aggregate typify many of the walkways, steps, risers, and finishes of plaza surfaces in much of the lower park.

One of the features that appears in the lower park in several locations is the use of a grid of larger round stones setting off panels of the typical crushed stone paving. This detail appears in the paving of the lower plaza and at the southwest corner landing, at W and 16th Streets.

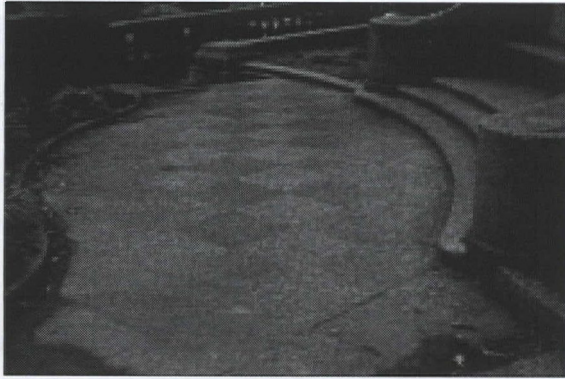


Figure 176: The landing at the southeast entrance to the park features crushed grey stone with beige in a checker-board pattern, 1997, see plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.)

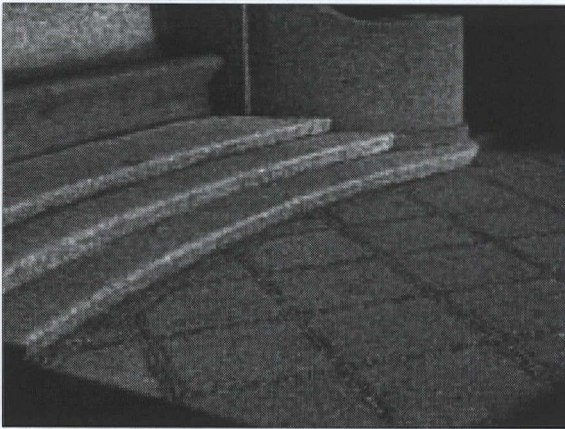


Figure 178: The landing at the southwest entrance to the park has a grey exposed aggregate grid outlined with 2" pebble, 1997, see plan sheet 30. (Land Ethics, Inc.)

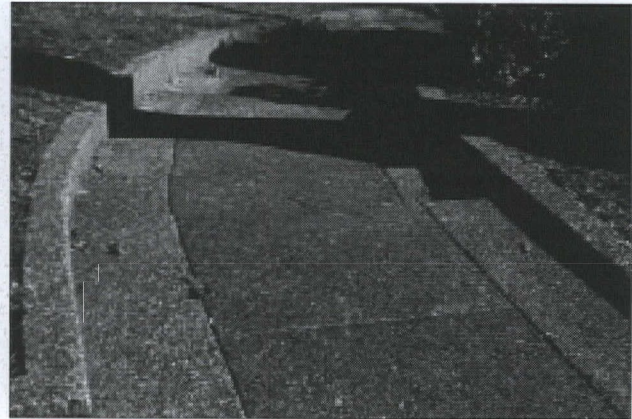


Figure 177: Walkways in the lower plaza area feature a center runner of crushed black trap with red flecks with beige pebble border and curb, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Chess Board - A unique feature located to the east of the reflecting pool was a life-size chess board with alternating panels of crushed black trap and beige pebble with 15-20% red flakes. No record of the use of the feature has been found.

Lower 16th Street Entrance - The small plaza between the 16th Street steps and the lower plaza has ten different star designs of finely crushed colored aggregates.

Lower Axis of the West Ascent - Four semi-circular areas, designed for sand play, (see figure 175) extended off this walkway. These ar-

as originally had sand in the lower areas and gravel in the upper portion. Horace Peaslee even wrote memos about the color of the play sand installed.

The Hillside Gardens and Cascades

The west ascent linking the lower terrace with the walks and stairs of the great wall was complete by 1930. The exposed aggregate concrete terraced walkway paralleling the cascades was completed by the close of 1933 (see plan sheet 10, Construction 1931-1933; and Pavement 1,2,and 3). Also completed at this time were two sets of curving stairs connecting the lower plaza with the terraced walkways on either side of the cascades. This was also true for the two sets of curving stairs at the top of the cascades, linking the east/west walk below the great wall with the two ascents that paralleled the cascade itself. In place at this time was an east/west walkway, linking the west ascent at the 16th Street overlook with the west terraced cascades walkway. A similar east/west walkway linked the east terraced cascades walkway with what would later become the plaza at the statue of Dante. Both of these east/west walkways contained a complex polychrome abstract paving pattern where they joined the terraced cascades walkway.

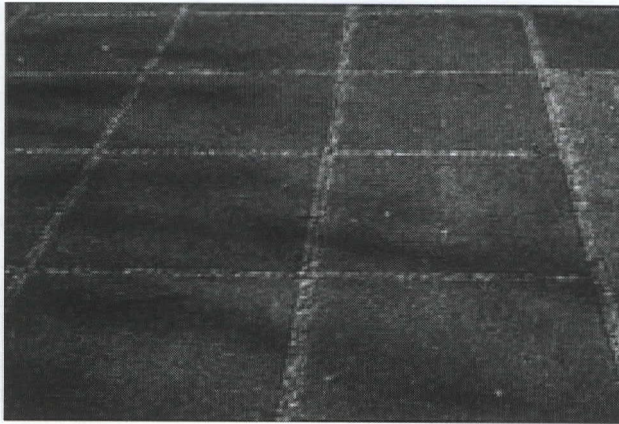


Figure 179: Pavement at the reflecting pool has square panels of crushed black trap with red flecks and a grid of 1" - 2" stones, 1997, plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 180: Pavement detail of 3" wide large pebble grid at the reflecting pool, 1997, see plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

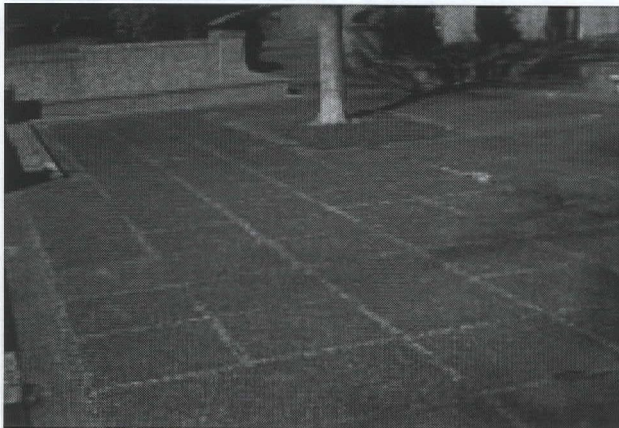


Figure 181: Pavement detail, west side of the reflecting pool, 1997, see plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

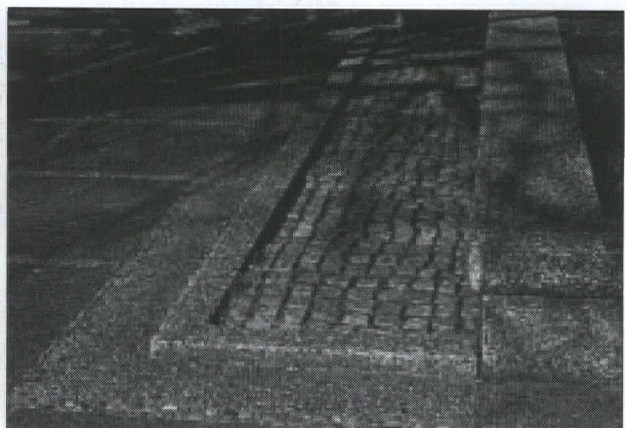


Figure 182: A narrow band of granite sets trims the corners of the reflecting pool and lower plaza, 1997, see plan sheet 30. Shown as a planting area on early planting plans, the granite sets were installed by 1936 and the official opening of the park. (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 183: The landing between the 16th Street entrance and the reflecting pool has eight polychrome star patterned panels in exposed aggregate 1997, see plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

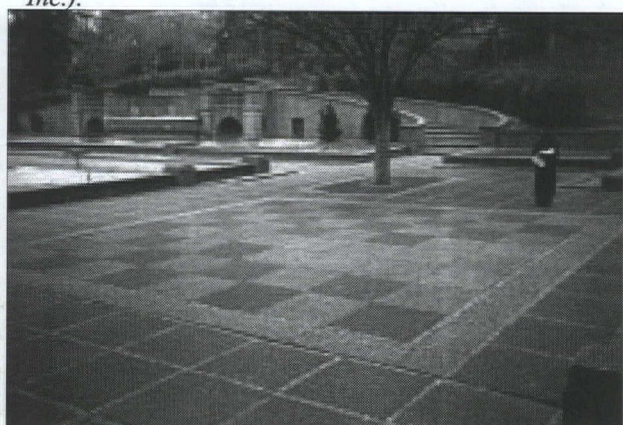


Figure 184: A life-size chess board formed with exposed aggregate pavement at the east side of the lower plaza, 1997, see plan sheet 30. Some of the panels are replacement panels (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 185: Exposed aggregate detail on treads adjacent to the cascades, 1997, see plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

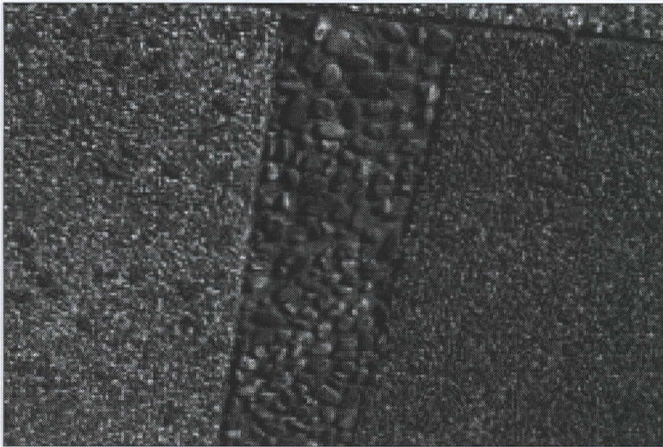


Figure 186: Detail at the west ascent with small beige pebble to the right, large pebbles in the center, and grey rock with red accents to the left, 1997, see plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 187: Landing leading to the cascades, 1997, see plan sheet 32 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 188: Exposed aggregate pavement at the east landing and 15th Street maintenance entrance, 1997, see plan sheet 32 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

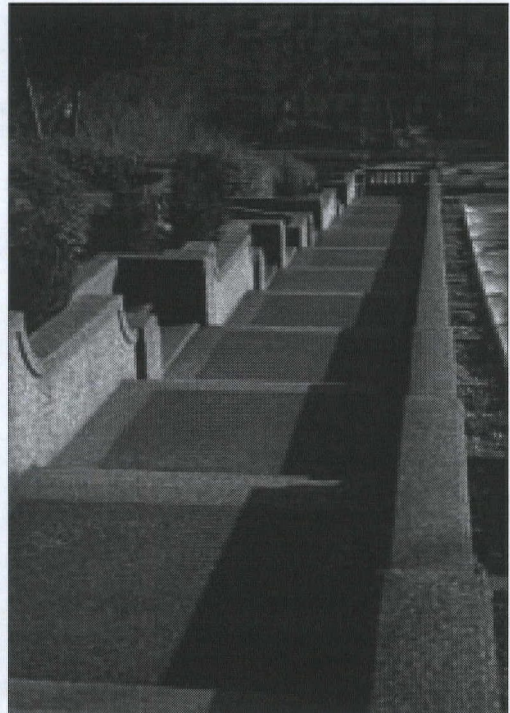


Figure 189: The walks framing the cascades are actually a series of risers with large panels of crushed black trap with red flecks and beige pebble borders, 1997, plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

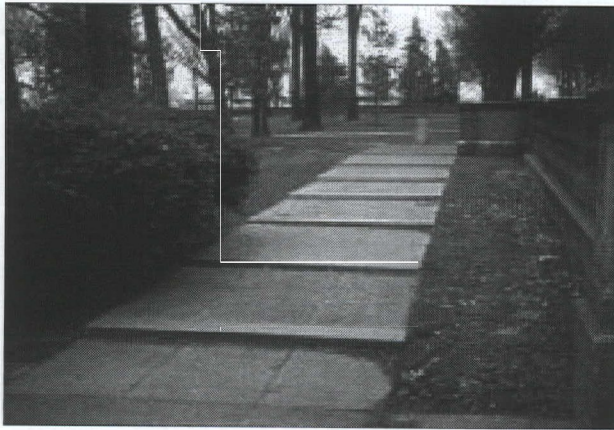


Figure 191: Step ramp leading from the mall to the linden alley and 16th Street main entrance to the park, 1997, see plan sheet 33 (Land Ethics, Inc.)

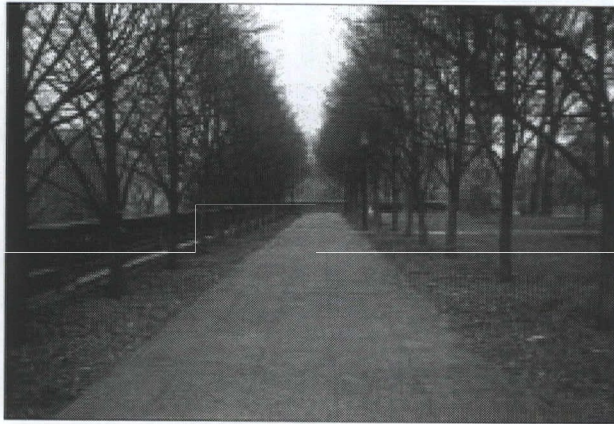


Figure 192: The linden alley has original exposed aggregate pavement in good condition, with stripes of replacement paving at locations of 1982 tie-back project, 1997, see plan sheet 32 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

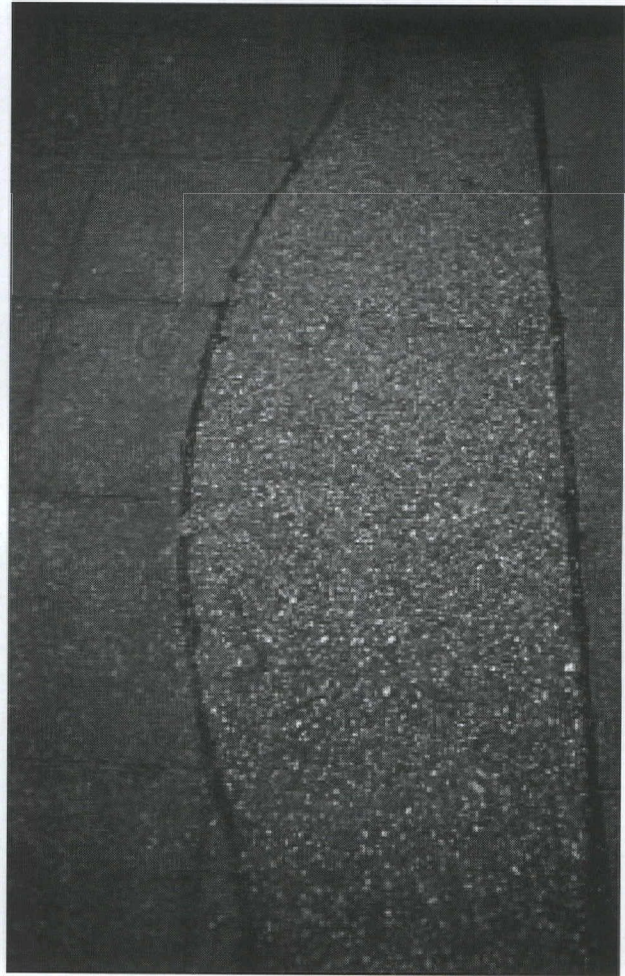


Figure 190: Pavement detail at 15th Street entrance with large beige pebble exposed aggregate sections, 1997, see plan sheet 33 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

The east ascent was completed in 1936, as was the small plaza in front of the statue of Dante. A narrow maintenance road enters the park from 15th Street, just below the great wall and was completed in 1936. Also included in this area was a narrow sloping pathway linking the maintenance road/park entrance with the upper park.

West Ascent - The west ascent landings have larger rounded stones as stripes between panels of crushed aggregate.

Cross Axis from Dante Statue to 16th Street Overlook - There are three extraordinary instances of complex polychromatic paving patterns located along this cross axis.



Figure 193: Like the walks along the cascades, the east ascent is a series of panels bordered by beige pebble 1997, see plan sheet 30 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 194: The cross axis from the Dante statue to the cascades has crushed black trap, a 21" red border and beige pebble curb, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

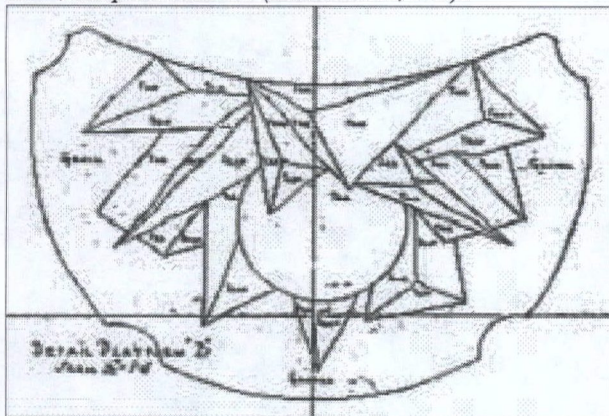


Figure 195: Pavement pattern on the east side of the cascades circa 1931, (National Archives RG 79, 41.5-3).

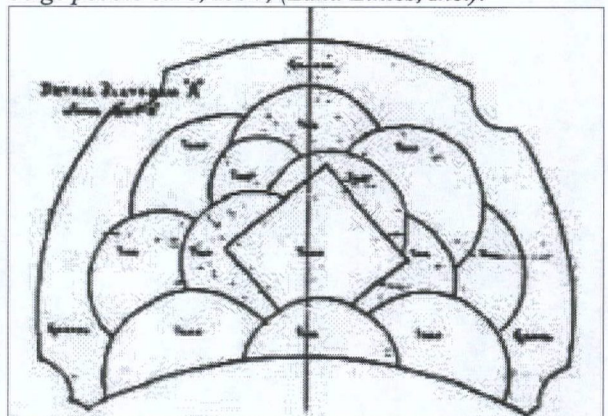


Figure 196: Pavement pattern, west side of cascades circa 1931, (National Archives RG 79, 41.5-3).



Figure 197: Steel-edged asphalt walk, installed 1982, in the informal gardens on the west side of the mall; Serenity statue in background, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

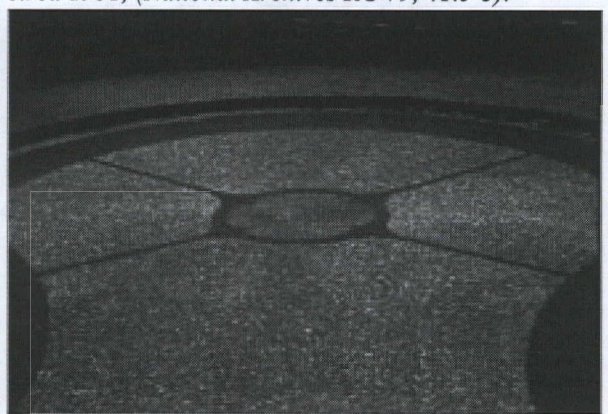


Figure 198: Pavement detail at the 16th Street overlook, 1997, see plan sheet 31 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

The Great Terrace

The great terrace, a short pathway linking the great terrace with the 15th Street entrance, two short pathways between the east side of the mall and the link to the 15th street entrance, and a short piece of the linden promenade completing it, were all completed in 1936.



Figure 199: Portions of exposed aggregate pavement on the great terrace are in very poor condition, 1997, plan sheet 32 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

The Mall

The linden promenade, except for the last section connecting it to the great terrace, the main 16th Street entrance to the park, and the steps leading up to the linden promenade from the 16th Street entrance were completed in 1918.

The walks on the northern portion of the mall were laid between 1920 and 1922. It was also during this period that meandering asphalt pathways were laid in the naturalistic gardens between 16th Street and the mall walks. In one historic photograph at RCP-CRF, the path appears to be concrete, but all subsequent information has it as asphalt. A short flight of steps was also installed at this time, linking the 16th Street sidewalk with the asphalt pathway.

Construction of the Chapin Street entrance was completed in 1925 (see plan sheet 6).

b. Existing Conditions

The existing conditions survey drawings, plan sheets 38 to 41, detail specific instances of paving failures. The following text contains additional information on the existing conditions.



Figure 200: Asphalt walk in the informal gardens on the east side of the mall, 1997, see plan sheet 34 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

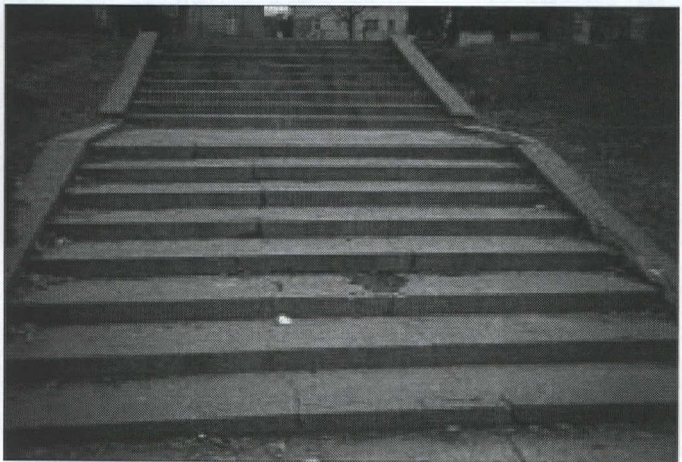


Figure 201: Entering the northwest corner of the park from 16th Street. Note that some of the concrete risers are cracked and damaged, 1997, see plan sheet 34 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 202: The original paved walkway (visible at the lower left of the image above) leading from the wall niche next to the play area at the northeast corner of the park is constructed of crushed black trap with beige exposed aggregate and contrasts with the smooth concrete non-original walkways of the upper mall, 1997, see plan 34 (Land Ethics, Inc.)

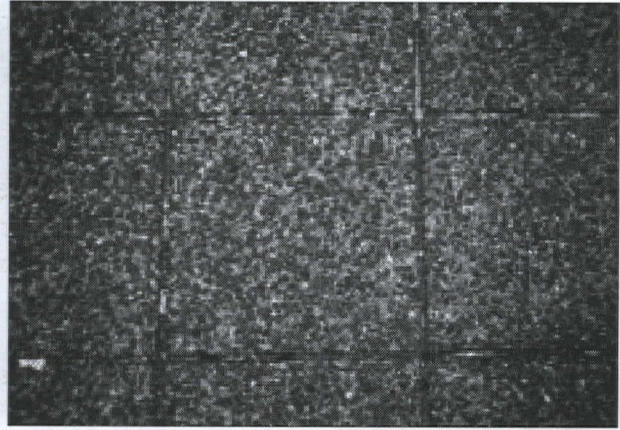


Figure 203: Original pavement walkways on the mall are crushed black trap with 5-10% beige, 1997, see plan sheet 33 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 204: Stairs and landing leading from the 16th Street main entrance of black trap. Replacement paving is clearly visible in picture, 1997, see plan sheet 33 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 205: Settlement has caused the pavement on the great terrace to become uneven in many areas, 1997, see plan sheet 32 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 206: Stairs descending from the great terrace are constructed with beige pebble exposed aggregate, 1997, see plan sheet 32 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 207: Smooth concrete walkways flanking the mall are replacement paving. Posts and chains were installed well after completion of the park to limit informal paths and cutting across corners, 1997, see plan sheet 34 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

See section 3.3 Topography for detailed descriptions of settlement issues related to paving.

Lower Plaza

Approximately seven of the panels in the chessboard have been replaced with new exposed aggregate concrete, different in value than the original. The 1982 construction plans for repair of walls and walks identified panels in the chess board for replacement, therefore it is assumed that they were replaced at that time.

Lower Axis of the West Ascent - The four semi-circular sand play areas are surfaced today in red and blue flagstone.

Hillside Gardens

Maintenance Drive Entrance at 15th Street - This drive is sometimes used as a maintenance entrance by NPS personnel and is also used as an unofficial pedestrian entrance.

Great Terrace

Major subsurface settling has caused the pavement on the great terrace to become uneven and badly damaged in many areas (see plan sheet 39). These conditions have been documented in correspondence contained in the National Archives, the Cultural Resource files of the National Park Service, and site condition-engineering reports. Uneven settlement of the great terrace has caused many of the storm drains to become either obstructed and/or out of grade so as to serve no useful function. This has resulted in areas of standing water on the exposed aggregate surface of the terrace, contributing to the deterioration.

This settlement was referred to by Peaslee in correspondence in the 1930's and may have been a result of original construction. The great terrace paving has been replaced in whole or



Figure 208: Smooth concrete with grid scoring at the 15th Street entrance. Note segment of entrance that has been resurfaced with exposed aggregate of crushed black trap, 1997, see plan sheet 33 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Figures 209 and 210 not used.

part, replacing damaged paving but not remedying the settlement. Thus, the abrupt tilts and angles caused by differential settlement still exist, but have been paved to connect high and low points. That replacement paving is now deteriorated creating new tripping hazards. The abrupt grade changes are also a serious impediment for those using mobility aids.

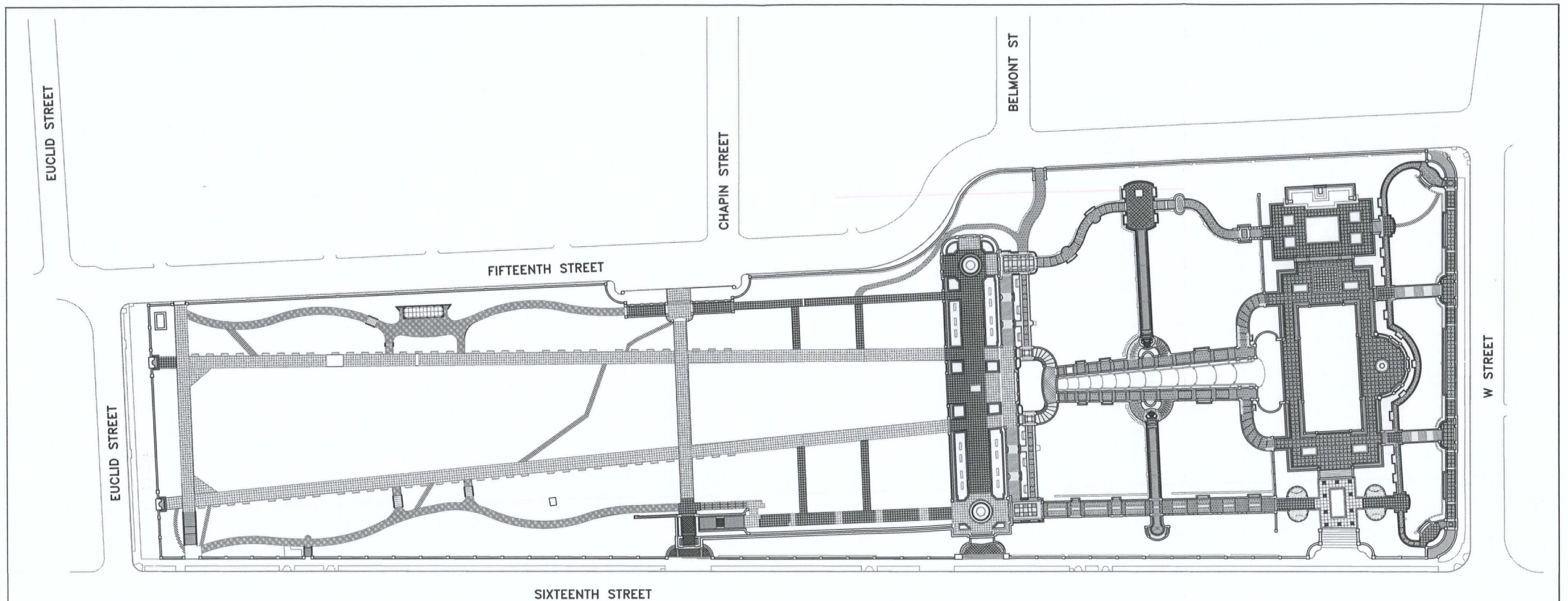
The Mall

The walk paving in the upper park along the mall and the curvilinear paths represents at least three repaving campaigns. The smooth concrete mall walks at the northern end of the mall, the first completed section of the park, are unique in the park, not being exposed aggregate and doubtless dating from a time before the significance of the exposed aggregate work was understood.

The converging mall walks south of the Chapin Street entrance cross axis are an attempt to match the dominant paving in the upper park: crushed black trap with a small percentage of evenly distributed beige aggregate. These walks are apparent as replacement paving because the beige aggregate is not evenly distributed, but appears in blotches and clumps. It is likely that this work was done as part of the 1982 paving replacement and tie-back project, for which drawings were prepared by the Denver Service Center.

The curvilinear asphalt walk between the western side of the mall and 16th Street was also repaved in 1982, eliminating step ramps for accessibility. One historic photograph at RCP-CRF showing either this path or the one on the other side of the mall shows paving that may be concrete or may be jointed asphalt. It is not clear from site examinations whether these paths were originally asphalt or concrete.

Other repaving and repair work in the upper park is fairly obvious. Individual steps were replaced in the flight from 16th Street to the northern end of the Linden Allee and are significantly lighter in color than the original ones of crushed black trap. Stripes of original paving in the Linden Allee were removed for the tie-back project and replaced. Most of these have settled and are slightly different from the adjacent paving.



GENERAL NOTES:

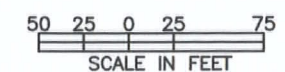
1. DECORATIVE CONCRETE PAVEMENT PATTERNS THROUGHOUT THE PARK CONSIST OF VARIOUS COMBINATIONS OF DIFFERING CONCRETE TYPES THAT ARE DISTINGUISHED BY CONTRASTS IN AGGREGATE MIXTURES, SIZES, COLORS AND TEXTURES.
2. DECORATIVE CONCRETE PAVEMENT PATTERNS ARE REPRESENTED IN THESE PAVEMENT DRAWINGS BY VARIOUS SHADES AND HATCHES THAT CLOSELY RESEMBLE ACTUAL BUILT APPEARANCE BUT ARE NOT INTENDED TO REFLECT ACTUAL FIELD CONDITIONS AND MEASUREMENTS.
3. MOST OCCURRENCES OF NON-ORIGINAL, REPLACEMENT PAVING CAN BE DETECTED UPON CLOSE EXAMINATION, AS NOTED WITHIN THESE DRAWINGS, BUT SOME CASES ARE QUESTIONABLE.
4. THE NUMBER DESIGNATION ASSOCIATED WITH CONCRETE MIXTURE TYPES DENOTES DIFFERENCES IN APPEARANCE DUE TO CHANGES IN BUILDING CONTRACTORS AND MATERIAL AVAILABILITY AS CONSTRUCTION PERIODS PROGRESSED SEQUENTIALLY.
5. THE CONTENTS OF PLAN SHEETS 29-34 ARE FROM architrave p.c., architects CONCRETE REPAIR REPORT.

KEY TO ORIGINAL HISTORIC CONCRETE PAVEMENT

- ORIGINAL TYPE "A" AGGREGATE CONCRETE MIXTURES
SMALL WASHED GRAVEL-RICH EARTH TONES: AS
- ORIGINAL TYPE "A" AGGREGATE CONCRETE MIXTURES
MEDIUM TO LARGE COBBLE WASHED GRAVEL-RICH EARTH TONES: AM, AL
- ORIGINAL TYPE "AC" AGGREGATE CONCRETE MIXTURE
SMALL WASHED GRAVEL W/FRAGMENTS
OF BROKEN QUARRY TILE WITHIN MIXTURE
- ORIGINAL TYPE "B" AGGREGATE CONCRETE MIXTURES
CRUSHED EBONY AND/OR BLUESTONE: B1-B4
CRUSHED EBONY AND/OR BLUESTONE W/WASHED GRAVEL: BA1-BA4
- ORIGINAL TYPE "BC" AGGREGATE CONCRETE MIXTURES
CRUSHED EBONY AND/OR BLUESTONE W/FRAGMENTS
OF BROKEN QUARRY TILE WITHIN MIXTURE: BC1-BC2
- ORIGINAL TYPE "D" AGGREGATE CONCRETE MIXTURE
FINELY CRUSHED DECORATIVE STONE AGGREGATE BORDER AND ACCENT DESIGNS:
DR = RED, DB = BLACK

KEY TO NON-ORIGINAL PAVEMENT MATERIALS

- NON-ORIGINAL CONCRETE REPLACING HISTORIC CONCRETE PAVEMENT
- NON-ORIGINAL REPLACEMENT OF ORIGINAL ASPHALT SURFACE
- NON-ORIGINAL FLAGSTONE INFILL PAVING AT SAND PLAY LOTS
- GRANITE PAVER BLOCKS - ORIGINAL INFILL PAVING WITHIN PLANTING STRIPS
EARLY SUBSTITUTE MATERIAL FOR UNSUCCESSFUL PLANTINGS NEAR POOLS
- VOLUNTEER PATH



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034

architrave p.c., architects Washington, D.C.
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
6-1-01

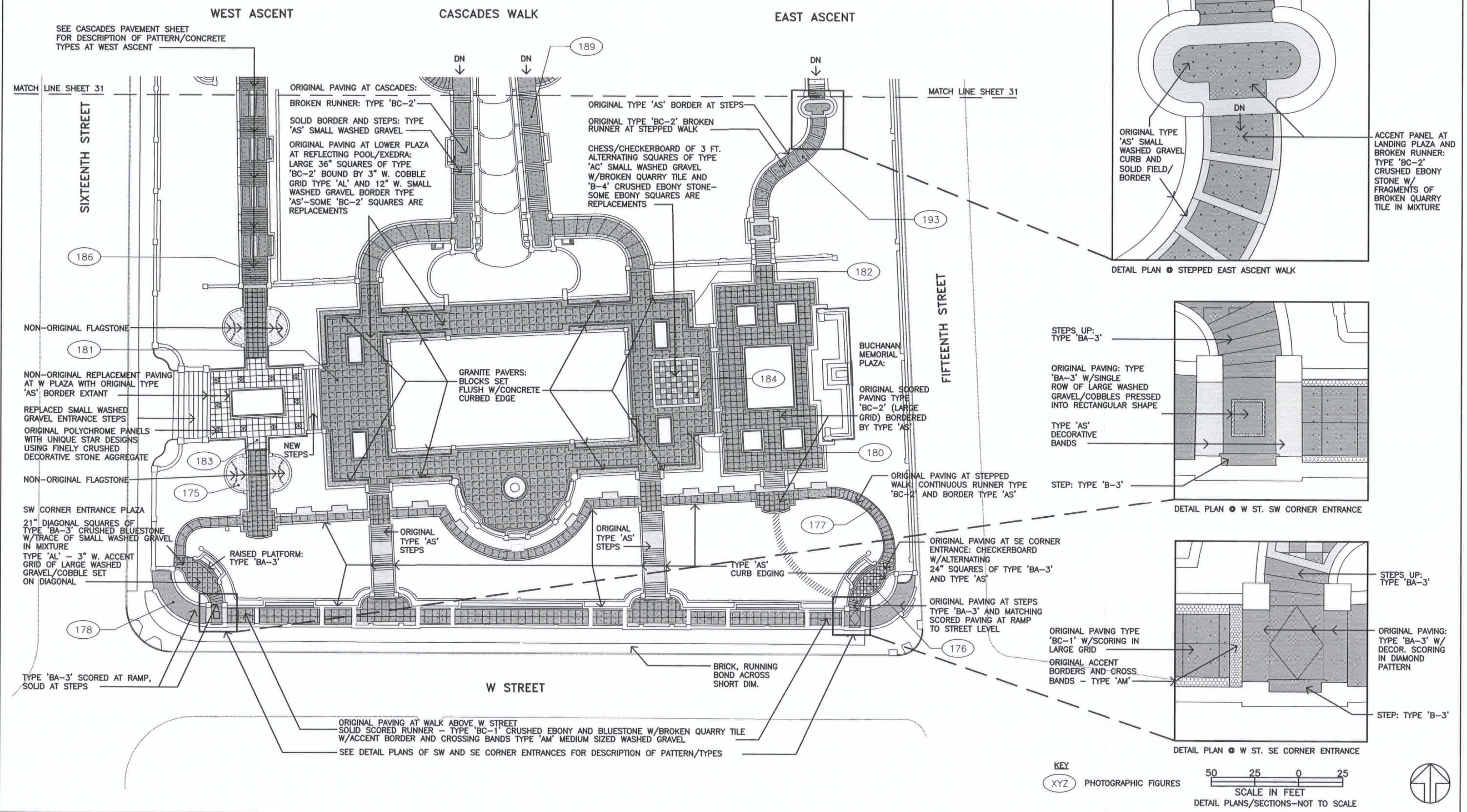
DRAWN BY:
MMG

PAVEMENT CONCRETE TYPES

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 29



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
architrove p.c., architects Washington, D.C.
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
12-1-01

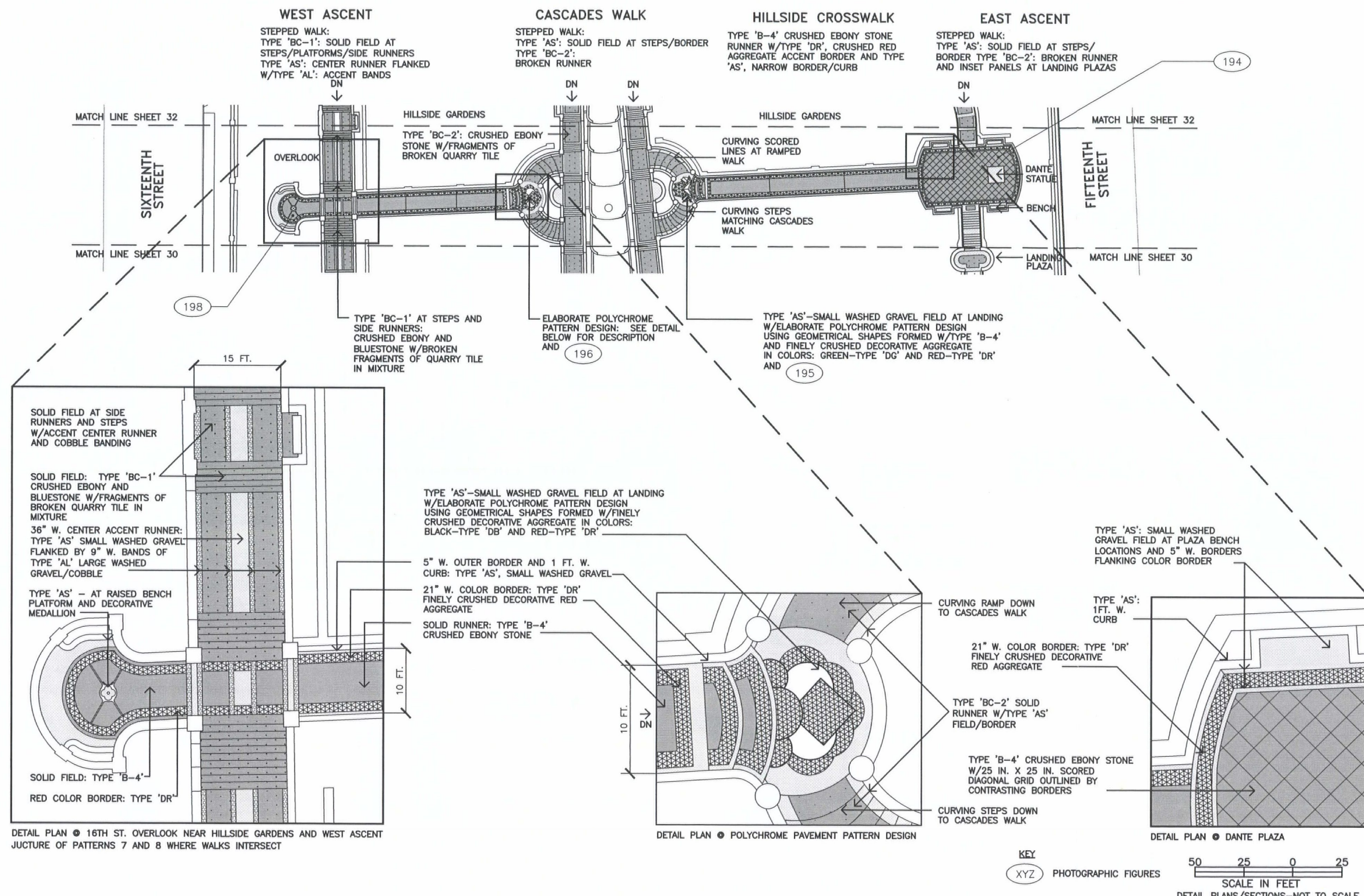
DRAWN BY:
MMG

LOWER PLAZA PAVEMENT 1

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87,141

SHEET 30



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service — National Capital Region
 15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW
 Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

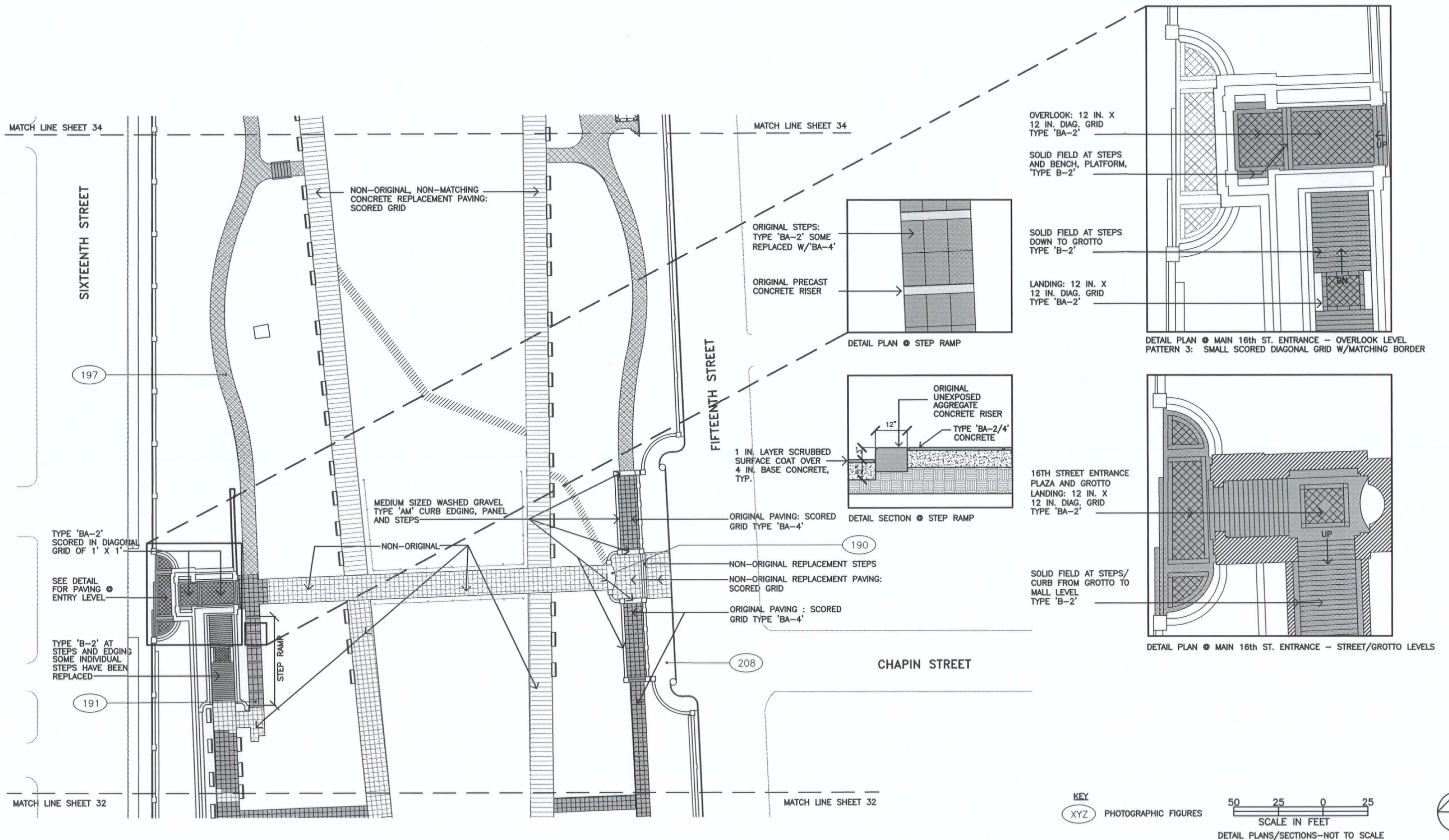
Contract #: 1443CX300094034
 architrave p.c., architects Washington, D.C.
 Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
12-1-01

DRAWN BY:
MMG

CASCADES PAVEMENT 2
 MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87,141
SHEET 31



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

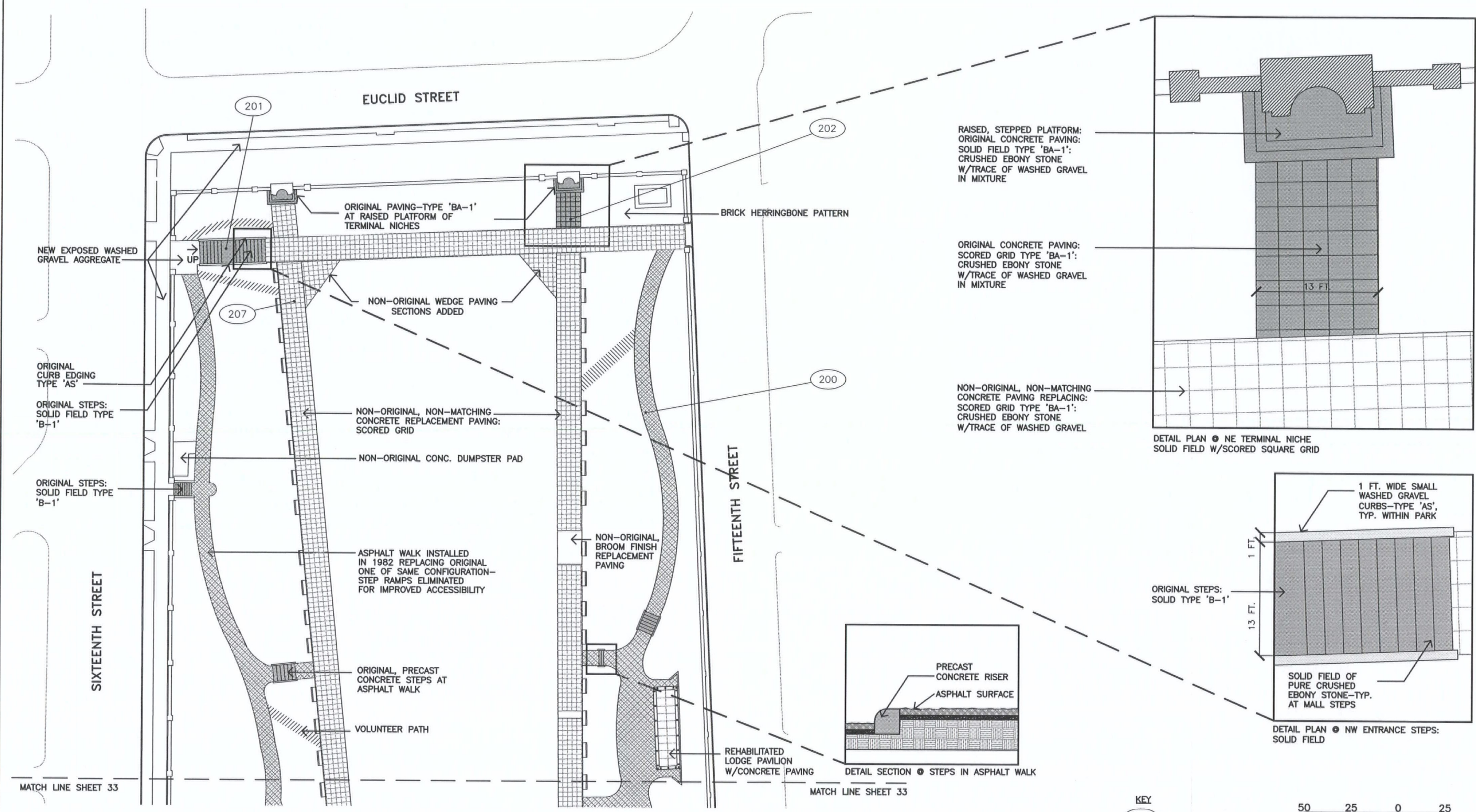
Contract #: 1443CX300094034
architrove p.c., architects Washington, D.C.
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
12-1-01

DRAWN BY:
MMG

MALL (MID)
PAVEMENT 4
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87,141
SHEET 33



KEY

(XYZ) PHOTOGRAPHIC FIGURES

50 25 0 25

SCALE IN FEET

DETAIL PLANS/SECTIONS-NOT TO SCALE

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region 15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.	DATE: 12-1-01	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h3>MALL (UPPER) PAVEMENT 5</h3> <p>MERIDIAN HILL PARK</p> </div>	DRAWING NO. 872 87,141
Contract #: 1443CX300094034 architrave p.c., architects Washington, D.C. Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD	DRAWN BY: MMG		SHEET 34

3.5.5 Benches

Benches and other seating provisions at Meridian Hill Park include a variety of integrally cast exposed aggregate concrete benches and several different types of free-standing benches with exposed aggregate supports and wood slat seats and backs. See plan sheet 35 and the photographs in this section for locations and types of benches in the park.

a. As-Built

The benches and seating in the park evolved as the overall park planting and design developed. No explicit discussion of intention or philosophy of seating has been found, but looking at the seating in the park it becomes clear both that seating was very important to the park's designers and that it became another opportunity for the exercise of creativity in making a richly varied designed environment.

Not surprisingly in this concrete intensive site, much of the seating in the park is integral with the extensive exposed aggregate concrete structural elements. Benches, ledges, niches created to receive benches, or niches that were benches, appear throughout the park in incredible variety. It almost appears that no two seats are alike and that Peaslee was reluctant to allow any opportunity to provide seating to go unused. Even elements not obvious as "benches" were seen as seating, as demonstrated by references to the raised planter walls on the great terrace as "seat copings" and discussion of the raised walls at the lower sand play areas as available for seating.

While seating was integral to the exposed aggregate concrete structures of the park, free-standing benches were developed somewhat later. Photographs from late in the park's construction show temporary benches still in place on the upper mall. (See figure 226, April 1936). It is clear, however, that free-standing benches were intended from the beginning as they are noted on early drawings and numerous places were provided for them along walks and at landings on the ascents.

The exposed aggregate benches throughout the park defy ready characterization, instead appearing to grow naturally out of the

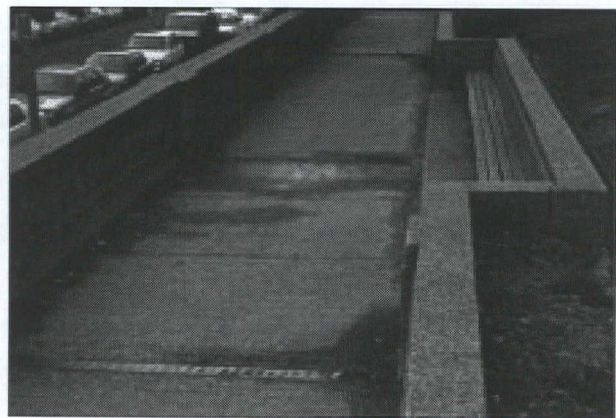


Figure 211: Wood slat benches with no backs at recesses in the retaining wall above W Street at the southern end of the park, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

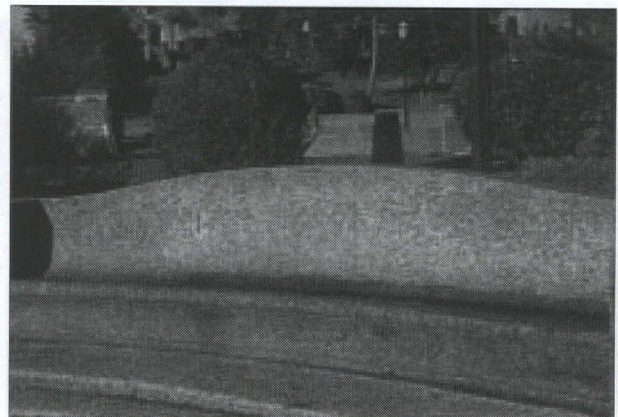


Figure 212: Molded aggregate bench at the southeast and southwest entrances to the park, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

surrounding concrete forms. Some benches are provided as seating components secondary in function to the wall they are part of (figure 216), some are beautifully molded forms (figure 212) consciously placed, some are romantic interludes (figure 213), and all are beautifully made, often with their own weep holes to prevent the collection of water.

The free-standing benches are of several types: with and without backs. The backless benches are further of two types: deeper and shallower. Finally, the various types are of different lengths, having three or four supports. All the park's free-standing benches consist of exposed aggregate supports with shaped wood slats. Not surprisingly, these benches were carefully thought out and intensely detailed. The wood slats were attached by galvanized wood screws from their backs to a 2" by 1/4" galvanized steel bar shaped to the profile of the larger contoured backless bench or to the benches with backs. These bars were then bolted with a slotted clip to the concrete supports, in three locations for the benches with backs, in two locations at the contoured backless benches. Holes for this purpose were cast in the supports with recesses on their lower sides to conceal the bolt head. The slats themselves were rounded to a large radius on their ends and at the bench edges. The benches with backs had a large wood cap at the back, attached as part of the strap system. The concrete supports were extended into the ground 1'-9" where the benches were located in earth or were doweled into the concrete where they were located in paving.

These benches, ultimately installed at the upper park and at some locations in the lower park, were apparently designed quite late in the park's development. The construction drawings for

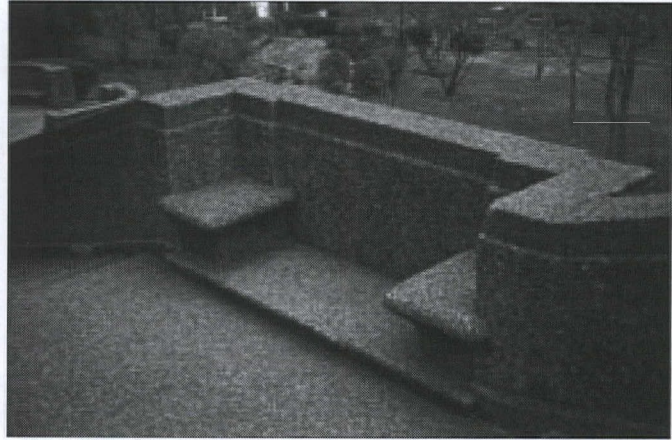


Figure 213: Small seats in the exposed aggregate concrete provide a scenic resting spot on the stairs descending the great wall, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 214: One of the six small backless wood slat benches on the cross walk at the base of the great wall, 1997, see plan sheet 35. Note that the original narrow slats have been replaced with wide boards at this bench (Land Ethics, Inc.).

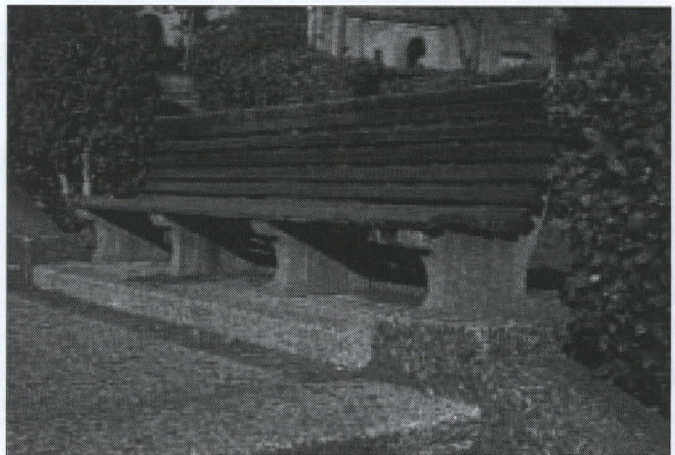
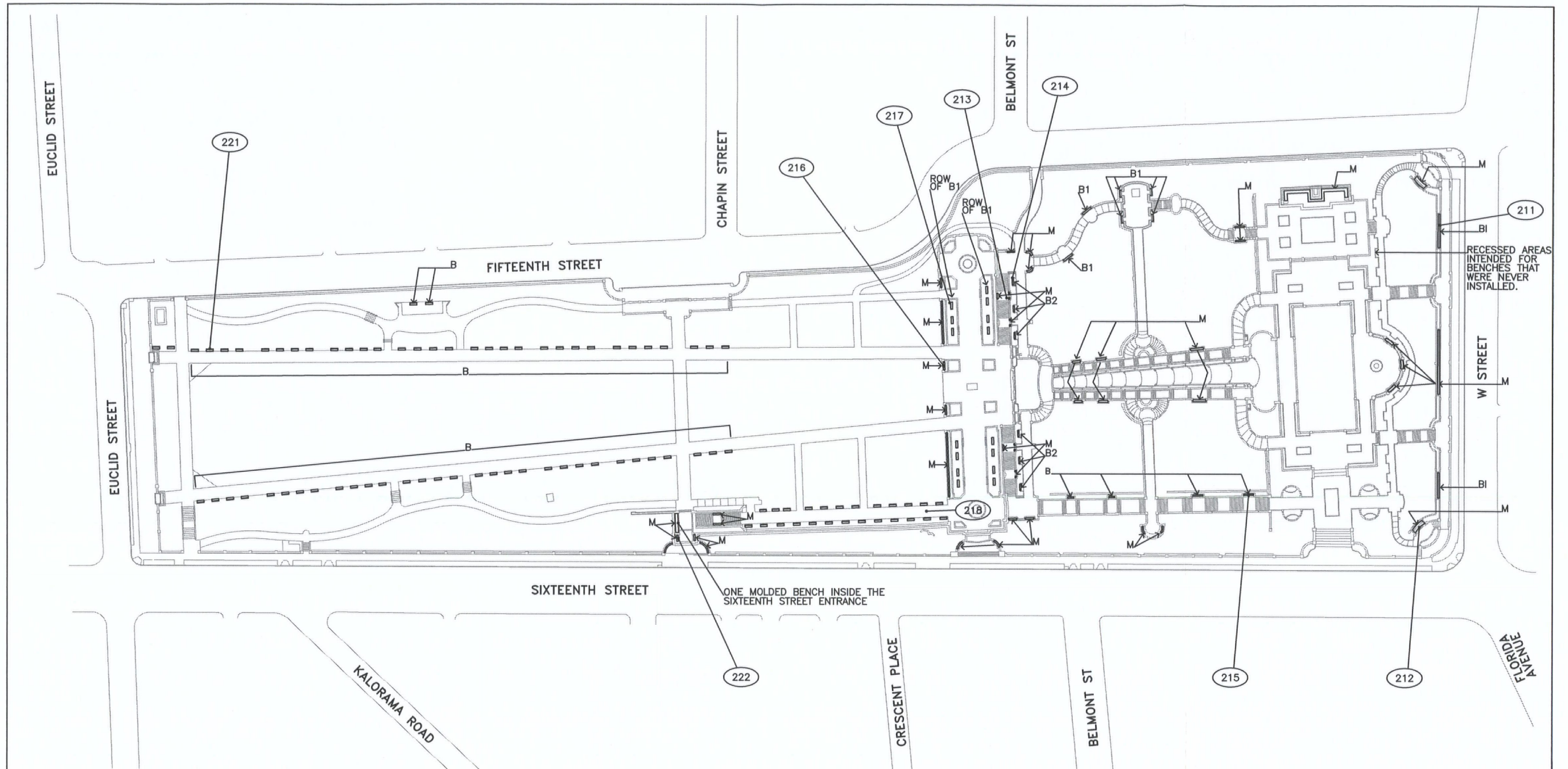
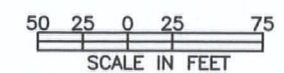


Figure 215: Four wood slat benches with backs on the west ascent, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



KEY

- B WOOD SLAT BENCH WITH BACKREST (SEE PHOTO Fig. 221)
- B1 WOOD SLAT BENCH WITH NO BACKREST (18" WIDE) (SEE PHOTO Fig. 217)
- B2 WOOD SLAT BENCH WITH NO BACKREST (14" WIDE) (SEE PHOTO Fig. 214)
- M MOLDED EXPOSED AGGREGATE BENCH (SEE PHOTO Fig. 216)
- PERMANENT BENCHES EXISTING PRE. 1937, NOW MISSING.
- XX PHOTOGRAPHIC FIGURE



MERIDIAN HILL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

DATE:
7-1-99

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1997
BENCHES

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 35



Figure 216: Exposed aggregate benches are molded into the walls between the great terrace and the southern end of the mall, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

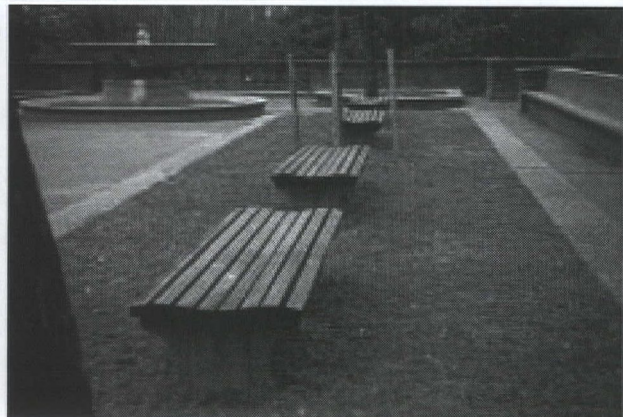


Figure 217: Wide contoured wood slat benches located in the grass planting panels on the great terrace, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 218: Bench and fountain, at the east end of the great terrace. Note the close spacing of the slats and the way the ends are rounded (MRCE, June 1938)

them are dated October 1935, with a shop drawing for fabrication from the Fred S. Gichner Iron Works, Fred Drew Company, contractor, dated February 1936.

No record has been found for the other type of backless bench in the park. These benches are narrower front to back and do not have holes cast into their concrete bases for attachment of their wood slats. Instead it appears that the slats were attached to wood ledgers attached to the sides of the concrete bases. It may be that the more elegant and complex detailing seen on the other benches was developed in response to these benches or that these benches were economical solutions installed either before or after the more elaborate ones.

In addition to differences in free-standing bench types, the benches varied in their siting. Benches were located in grass along the upper mall, the linden allee, and in the raised beds on the great terrace. Paving niches were provided throughout the lower park to receive benches.

b. Existing Conditions

All the benches in the park today are in original locations. Some benches that were present in the park in 1936 are missing, such as the double row of benches along the linden allee (backless toward the 16th Street retaining wall and with backs on the oak grove side of the allee). Although there is physical evidence of benches having been present at one time at the upper play area, we have found no other record of these benches.

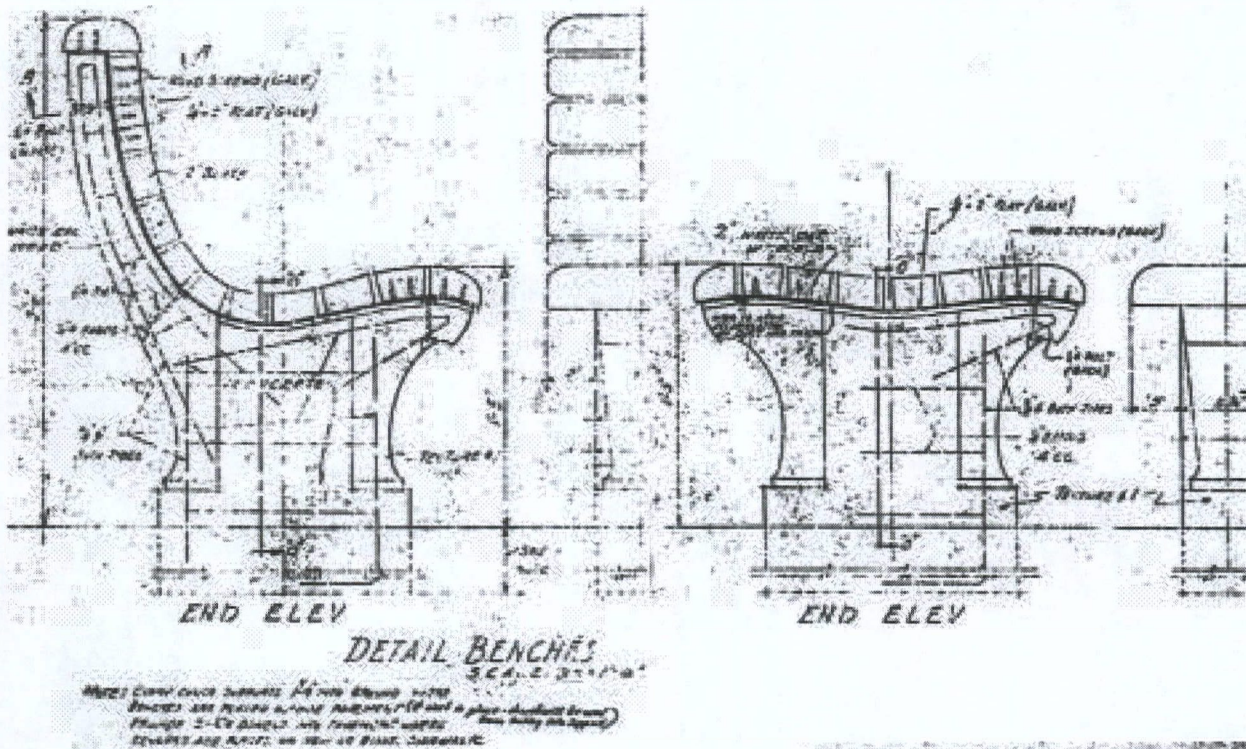
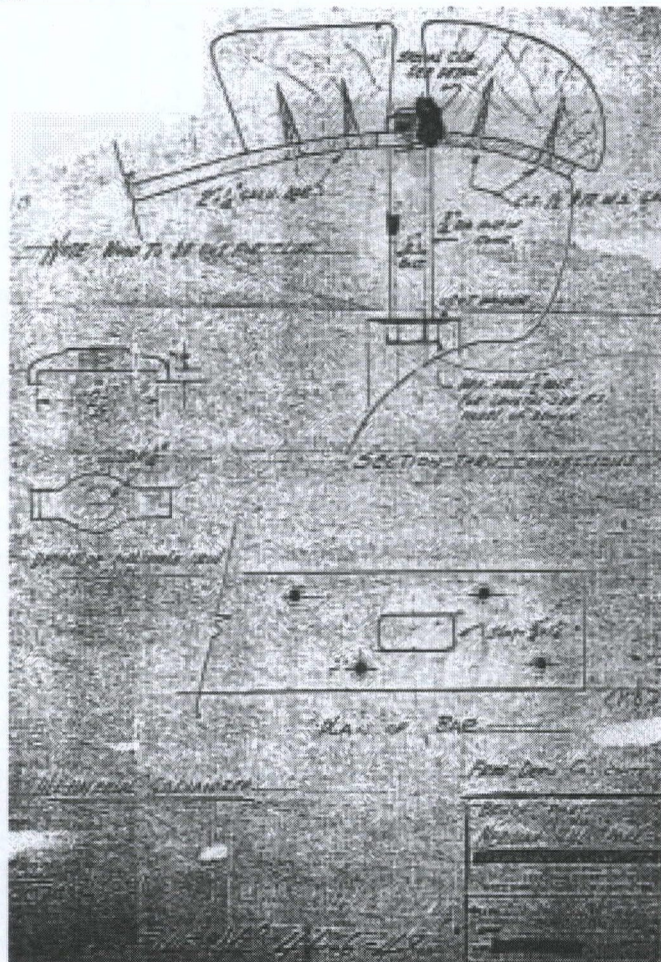


Figure 219: Construction drawings for benches, dated October of 1935 and a shop drawing for fabrication from the Fred S. Gichner Iron Works, Fred Drew Company, contractor, dated February 1936. See note about setting the concrete supports and shaping and rounding of wood slats, identified as white oak. (Note reads: "Carry bench supports 1'-9" into ground where benches are placed outside pavement. (if cast in place-dowel will be used from footing into support) Provide 2-1/4" round dowels into pavement where benches are placed on new or exist. sidewalk.") The shop drawing clearly shows complex slat mounting detail employed on the benches. (National Archives 41.6-9A, bench construction drawing; 41.6-48, shop drawing)



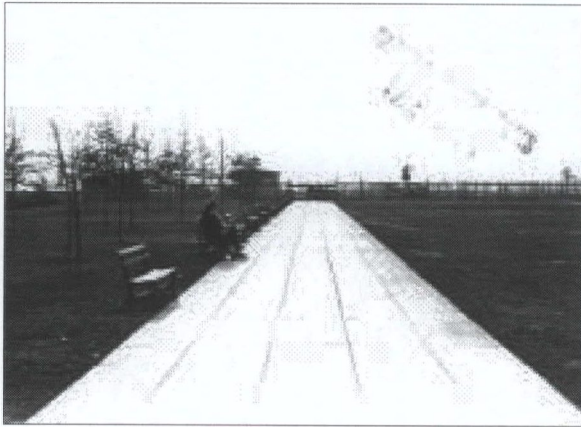


Figure 220: Temporary benches along the mall were later replaced with models shown in figure 221 (RCP-CRF, no date, post 1922 but before 1924-27).



Figure 221: Benches along the mall walkways, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

One intermediate exposed aggregate concrete support is missing from one of the mall benches (see plan sheet 35). Otherwise, all the original concrete supports are in place. Some of the drain holes at some of the molded concrete seats are clogged.

The loss of integrity for the benches is a direct result of the elegant, but complex, original wood slat attachment detail. This detail requires the removal of three steel straps, attached at nine locations, in order to replace a slat. In the years since the completion of the park many of the bolts attaching the straps to the concrete supports have been replaced with a variety of bolts. In some cases the bolt has been reversed from its originally designed orientation and in some cases numerous washers have been added to make the nut or bolt head more easily accessed.

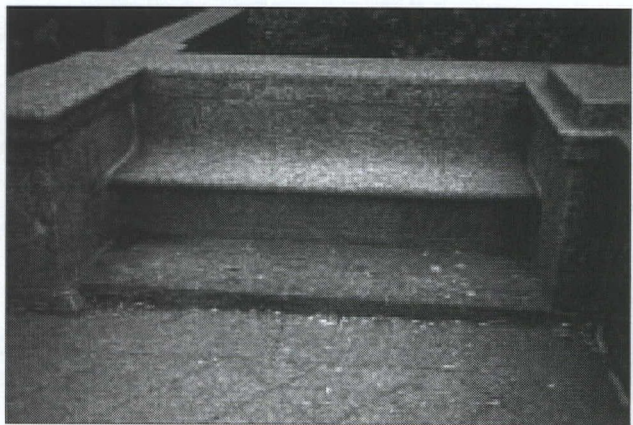


Figure 222: Exposed aggregate benches on the overlook above the 16th Street main entrance to the park, 1997, see plan sheet 35 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

The original bench drawings show wood slats with eased corners, intermediate slats with tapered profiles (to minimize the gap between slats), large radius curves on the front edges, and rounded corners at the ends of each slat. Whether all of this shaping as shown was actually originally done is not known. The slats themselves were called out to be white oak. It does not appear that any of the slats in the park today are white oak, although a slat-by-slat evaluation was not done.

Many of the wood slats in place in the park today are obviously not original. None of the edges are eased or have radius profiles. Some of the shallow free-standing benches now have only a few wide boards instead of a number of 3" slats. Some of the deeper back-less benches have been flattened when slats were replaced, rather than recreating the contoured profile visible in figure 217. Only a few slats are missing throughout the park at any given time and while plastic replacement slats were apparently used at one time, such is not currently the case.

3.5.6 Play Areas

Although the park was intended from its inception for passive recreation, seven children's play areas were designated and developed to varying degrees by 1936 when the park was officially opened.

The major provision made for children's play in the park design was sand play, at the upper northeast corner and west of the lower plaza. Two hemlock hedge-enclosed grassed "play areas" were provided mid-mall just south of the Chapin Street entrance cross-axis, but it is not clear how these areas were expected to be used. Correspondence after the park's opening discussed illicit activities in these areas.

Today, the two the mid-mall hedge enclosed play areas are gone altogether and none of the sand play areas is functioning as such.

a. As Built

Seven areas were designated as children's play areas in 1936.

Sand Play Areas: Lower Plaza

Four small semicircular sand play areas were constructed on the west side of the lower plaza on axis with the west ascent. The semicircles had sand areas recessed below grade with low, brown pebble exposed aggregate retaining walls for seating and enclosure of the entire semicircle (see figures 223 and 224).

Sand Play Area: Mall

A rectangular play area with sandbox was located in the far northeast corner of the park, at 15th and Euclid Streets. This play area had an 8' x 15' "sand bin" with a low, 10" exposed aggregate curb (see figure 225). The entire area surrounding the sandbox was surfaced in brick. Detailed plans for this play area (see figure 227) indicate that it was enclosed with a hemlock hedge to the south and west in addition to a 30" tall "structural iron fence." The plans also noted that this hemlock hedge was removed. A European

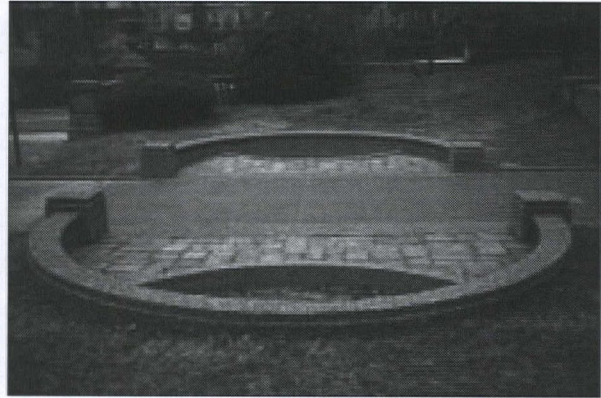


Figure 223: Four crescent-shaped children's sand play areas were located on the west side of the lower plaza, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

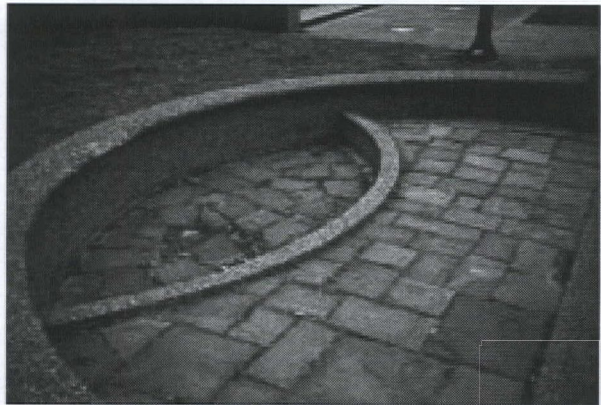


Figure 224: Detail of Play Area #2 at the west end of the lower plaza, 1997. The gravel originally shown on the upper level as well as the sand area itself, are both paved in non-original vari-colored flagstone (Land Ethics, Inc.).

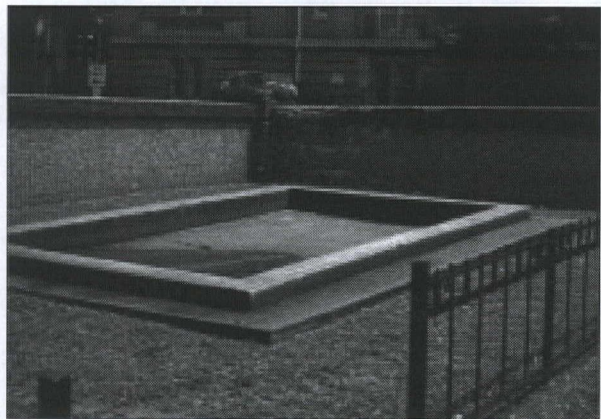


Figure 225: A rectangular play area and sand box [Play Area #1] at the northeast corner of the park, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

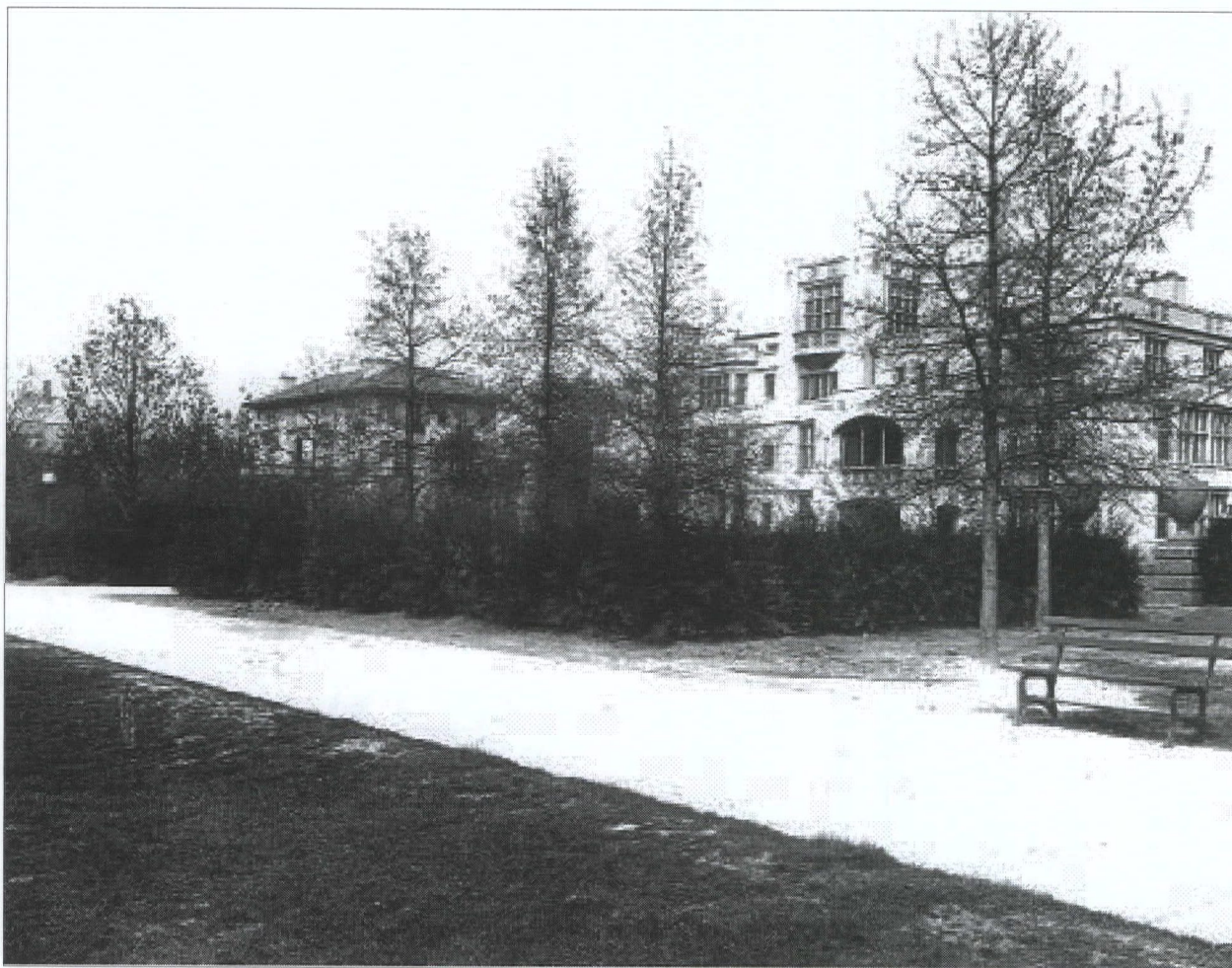
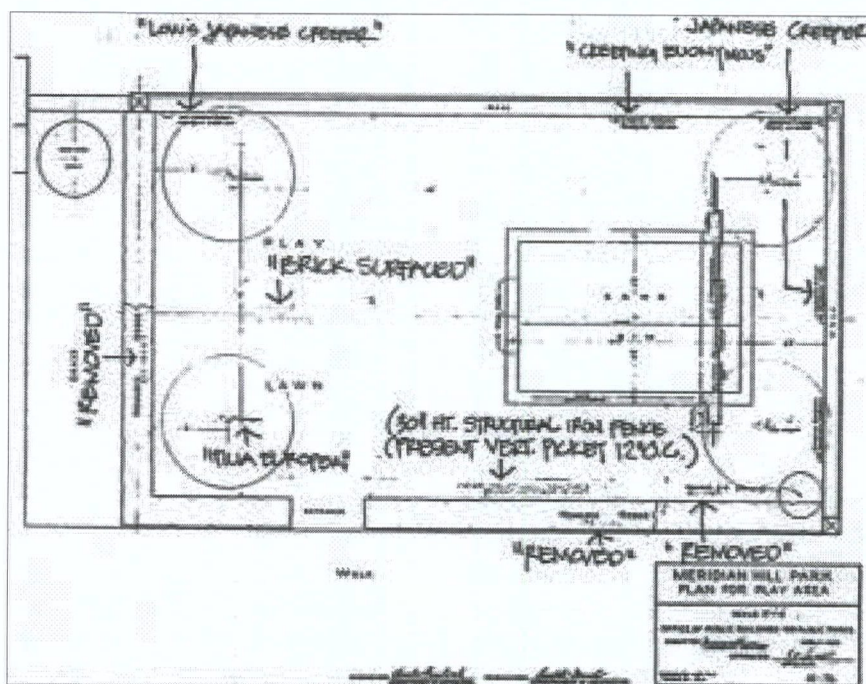


Figure 226: The hemlock hedge-enclosed children's play area at the 15th and Chapin Street entrance to the park. Note the temporary bench to the right of the image, before installation of the permanent wood and concrete benches. (RCP-CRF, April 28, 1936).

Figure 227: Drawing of play area in northeast corner of the park, dated April 11, 1925 (with illegible notes enhanced). Interestingly, the "structural iron fence" noted on this drawing may well have been a standard one for the era as identical ones still exist at the corner of Fourth Street and Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. (National Archives, 41-76).



linden tree (*Tilia europea*) was located at each corner of the rectangular space. The 6' - 8' Hemlock at the southeast corner was also noted as removed. Low's Japanese Creeper (*Ampelopsis veitchi lowi*) and Creeping Euonymus (*Euonymus radicans*) were planted in pockets at the base of the exposed aggregate walls to the east and north of the play area.¹

Two hemlock hedge-enclosed "play areas" were located adjacent to the north/south axial walkways along the mall, at the 15th and 16th Street entrances to the park.

b. Existing Conditions

The Lower Plaza

Play Areas #2, #3, #4, #5 - None of the four small, crescent-shaped sand play areas are used today for sandboxes. Also, the upper area shown on figure 44 as gravel is now paved in vari-colored flagstone as is the lower section intended for sand.

The Mall

Play Area #1 - This site is in a state of disrepair. The brick pavement is overgrown with grass and the sandbox no longer contains sand. The sand box weep holes are clogged, and the concrete sand box itself is cracked. All of the European linden trees are missing as are the Creeping Euonymus and Japanese Creeper on the surrounding exposed aggregate walls. The 30" tall iron fence is present although missing most of its finials.

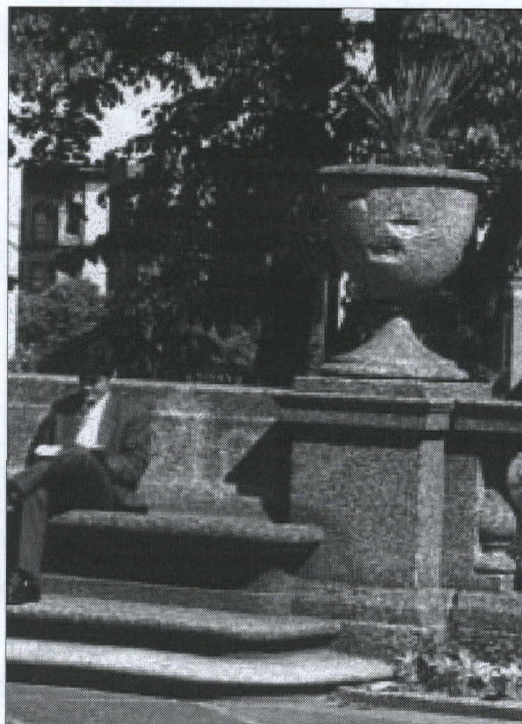


Figure 228: Planting urn at the exedra, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

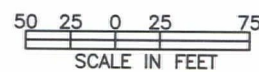
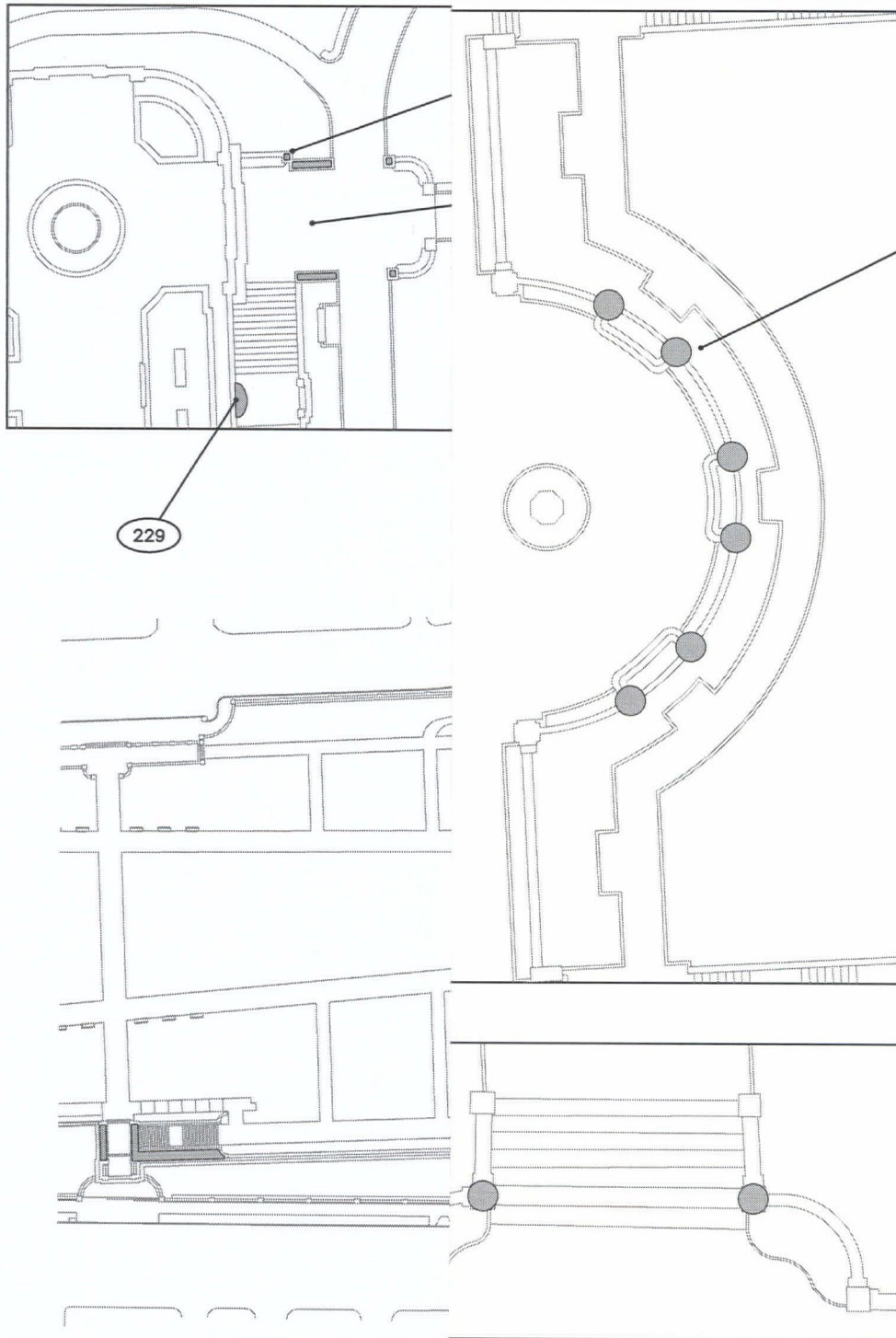
3.5.7 Urns and Planters

Numerous opportunities for detail plantings were built into the exposed aggregate structural walls and provided in urns at Meridian Hill Park. See plan sheet 36 for the locations of the major planting pockets and urns and see the photographs accompanying this section.

a. As-Built

During the protracted design and construction of Meridian Hill Park, one of the persistent themes was the desire of its designers that the exposed aggregate concrete wall surfaces be vine-covered. Euonymus, clemaclematis, Japanese creeper, wisteria, and English ivy are some

¹ Meridian Hill Park, Plan For Play Area, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, Irving Payne, Landscape Architect, April 11, 1925, Signed Approved by Col. Sherrell. National Archives RG 41-76.



**MERIDIAN
CULTURAL LAND**

DATE:
-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

**PLANTING
URNS AND
WALL POCKETS**
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 36



Figure 229: One of the planters located on landings of stairs descending the great wall. Note the recessed light fixture cast below the planter's lip. 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

of the vines specified and planted in the park right up until its official opening. It is clear that Peaslee wanted an intimate relationship between the built and natural environments in the park. In some of the most intensely hard surfaced areas of the park, such as the base of the great wall of the great terrace, at the lower plaza, and other areas, he provided planters of various types for detail plantings to soften the construction.

b. Existing Conditions

As is apparent in the accompanying photographs, many of the urns and planting pockets in the park no longer have anything growing in them. The ones that are successfully sustaining plant materials are either well-watered (such as the planting pockets along the cascades where the leakage from the cascades is supporting thriving iris, see figure 232) or they are planted with hardy, drought tolerant materials like the urns and pockets planted with yucca (see figure 231). Early correspondence mentions the difficulty in establishing and maintaining planting in these locations subject to temperature extremes and with little soil to hold moisture.

Nearly all of the originally designed planting pockets in the park are still present. Two pockets at the trellises at the park shelter have been covered over and the pockets at the upper sand play area are absent or obscured today.

Several of the urns are missing, notably two on the 16th Street retaining wall below the overlook, as well as the balustrade section between them.

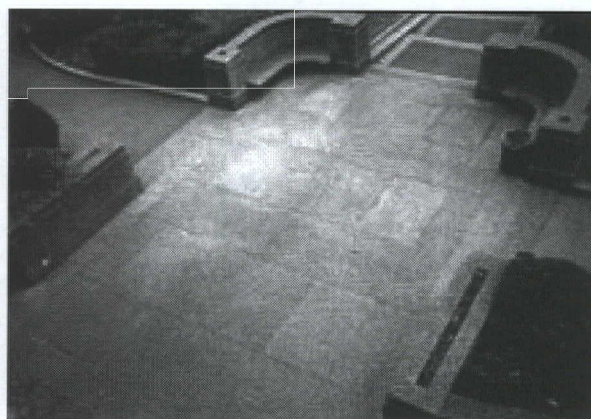


Figure 230: Narrow planting pockets were cast into walls at the upper terminus of both the east and west ascents, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

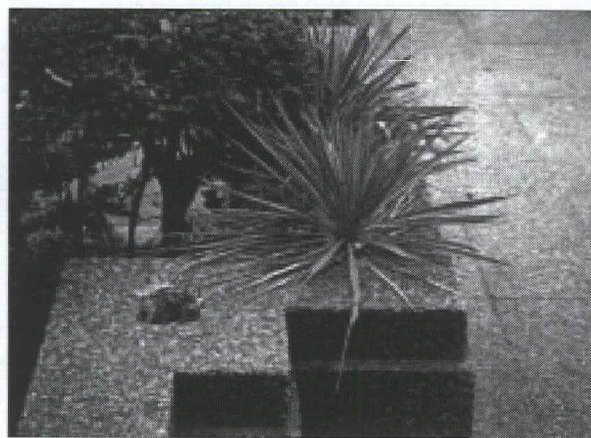


Figure 231: Detail of planting pockets located in exposed aggregate walls in the hillside gardens and cascades area, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 232: Planting pockets are located on either side of the cascades, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

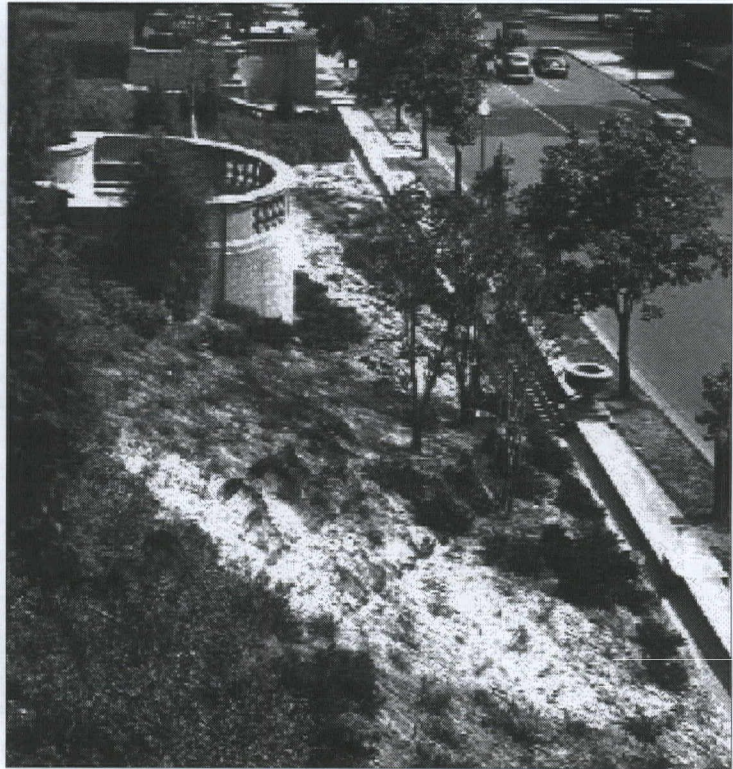


Figure 233: Two planting urns, circa 1936, were located atop open balustrades on the 16th Street retaining wall directly below the overlook (RCP-CRF, c. July 14, 1936).

The Lower Plaza

The exposed aggregate concrete of each of the six planting urns in the exedra has spalled, exposing portions of reinforcing steel (see figure 235). These urns also have efflorescence. Three of the eight planting urns on the wall above W Street are deteriorated, with spalling revealing sections of steel reinforcing. The two planting urns at the lower 16th Street entrance to the lower plaza are in good condition, showing no visible signs of deterioration.

The Hillside Gardens and Cascades

The two crescent-shaped decorative planters located along the stairs from the great terrace are both in good condition with the exception of the recessed light fixtures, which are damaged. It does not appear that any formal plantings have been placed in these two planters.

The narrow planting pockets cast into the low exposed aggregate retaining walls at the upper terminus of the east and west as-

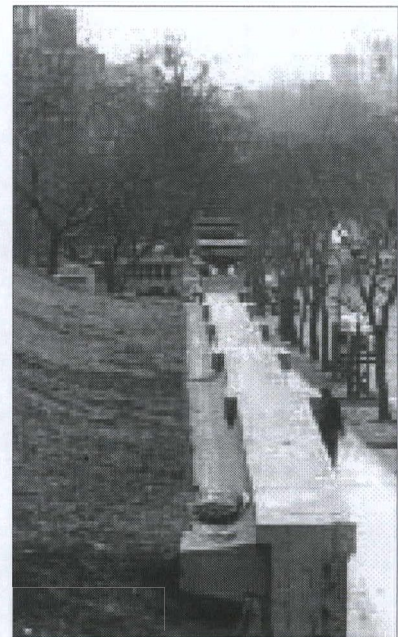


Figure 234: Planting urns, visible above on the 16th Street retaining wall below overlook are missing today (RCP-CRF, c. March 16, 1936).

cents are all basically in good condition, although it is not known if water is seeping into the interior of the walls. In some areas, there are signs of moisture seepage and efflorescence on the wall surfaces, particularly on the walls below the planting pockets at the east landing below the great wall (see plan sheet 39 Existing Conditions 2). Whereas some segments of these pockets contain plantings, such as yucca, others collect debris.

The linear planting pockets that line the cascades appear to be in good condition, although numerous sections of retaining wall above these pockets have spalled or broken and have efflorescence (see plan sheets 38-39 Existing Conditions 1-2). Apparently these pockets leak as water from the cascades stands in them.

Neither of the two planting urns located below the 16th Street overlook on the west ascent, atop balustrades on the retaining wall remain today. The balustrade has also been removed.

The Mall

The planting pockets on the wall tops at the overlook above the 16th Street entrance to the park appear to be in good condition, although it is unknown if these pockets leak water to the insides of the walls. At the time of the field investigation, these pockets were not planted and were filled with debris.

3.5.8 Trash Receptacles

a. As Built

It is not possible to determine the historical location or design of trash receptacles in the park as no plans exist to indicate the intended design or proposed placement. No plans for the park, dating back to the earliest concept plans prepared by George Burnap, show the placement of trash receptacles. Thus, it is not possible to determine if the locations of the current containers replicate the location of original units. Only one historic photograph indicates a trash receptacle other than the modern tulip-style units found in the park today (see figure 236), and we think it was probably a temporary fixture. One reference has been found in which Peaslee refers to a trash receptacle for the park, but no such images, photographs or construction drawings have been found.

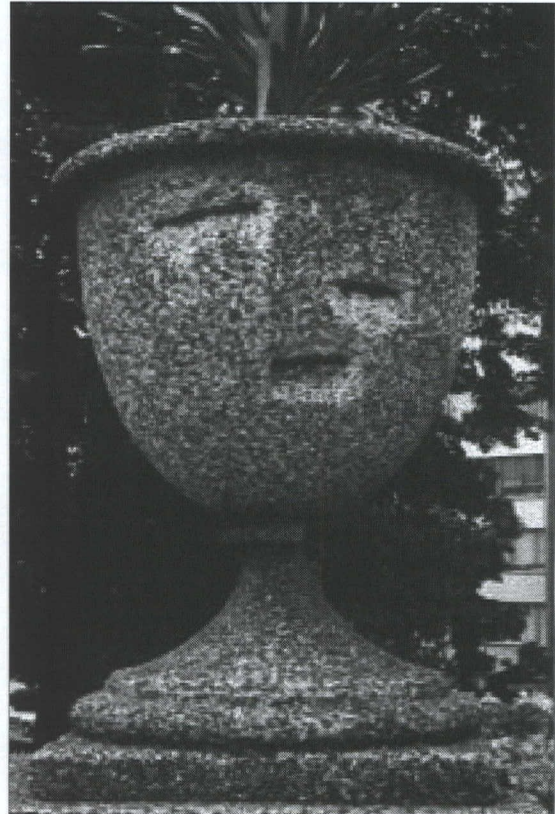


Figure 235: The exposed aggregate surfaces on each of the six planting urns in the exedra are damaged with portions of rusted reinforcing visible, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

b. Existing Conditions

Today, there are actually four types of trash receptacles in use (see plan sheet 45 for types and locations). The majority of these are the standard National Park Service tulip-style trash receptacles with vertical wood slats and metal liners, most of which were installed in the park starting in the 1960's (see figure 237). Also found in the park today are individual metal trash cans with domed tops (see figure 238), plastic trash cans (see figure 239), and two box-shaped exposed aggregate trash units with plastic trash-can inserts (see figure 240). The exposed aggregate trash units, although constructed of a similar material used throughout the park, show differences in aggregate color and size, and also lack the distinctive style of other park features. Also, the shape and style of these units is more modern than that of other designed elements of the park, such as the original drinking fountains. Although no documentation exists indicating the proposed location of any trash receptacle, it is unlikely that Peaslee would have placed a trash receptacle in a tree well, based on the careful siting and design decisions that he demonstrated in the rest of the park.

The NPS standard tulip-type trash receptacles, developed and used as a standard throughout NCR urban parks in the late 1960's, consist of a slightly flared cylindrical form of vertical wood slats secured to three horizontal steel rings with a black painted steel liner inside. When first de-

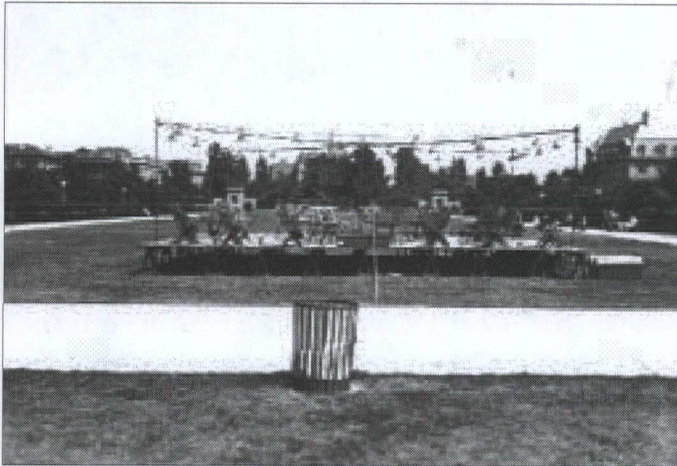


Figure 236: Early trash receptacle, circa 1929, located at the cross axis of the mall (RCP-CRF, c. August 9, 1929).

veloped, the bottom of the liner was open for drainage, but this detail was subsequently modified for rat control with the addition of a steel bottom with drainage holes. This container is raised above grade on a steel pedestal and has a thirty gallon standard trash can in it. Since development of this standard, there has been a certain amount of relaxation of its use throughout NCR park areas, including this park.

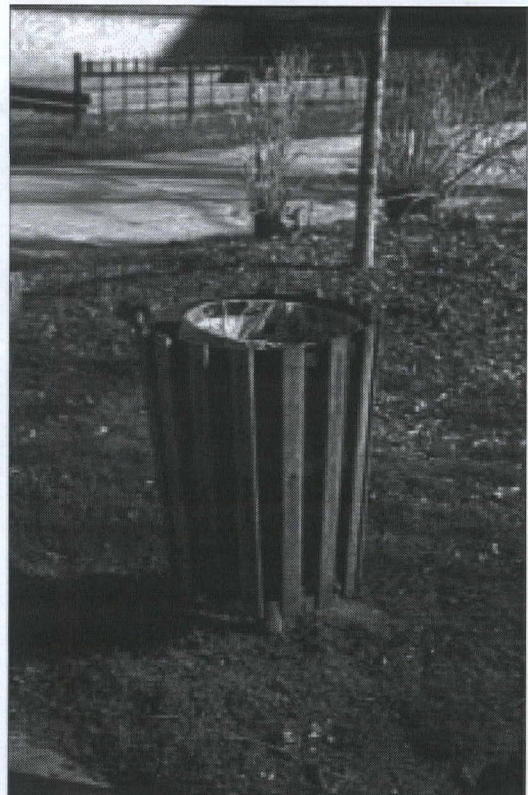


Figure 237: National Park Service tulip-style trash receptacles are located throughout the park today, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

No original trash receptacles remain and replacement units are in a general state of disrepair. In some instances, the only remaining portion of the tulip-type trash receptacle is the pedestal post and bottom ring of the receptacle. The remain-



Figure 238: Metal trash cans are used throughout the park today, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

der of the receptacle has either been broken or burned. It is also common to find the tulip-type receptacle sitting directly on the ground with no pedestal remaining. Many of the metal cans are badly dented and scratched. See plan sheets 38-41 for identification of damaged receptacles and plan sheet 45 for locations of trash receptacles.

3.5.9 Drinking Fountains

The original drinking fountains installed in the park had an ornamental shell-shaped bowl, cast in concrete, on top of an exposed aggregate pedestal (see figures 241 and 243). These original fountains had large bases, cast integrally with the fountain, so that children could reach the water nozzle.

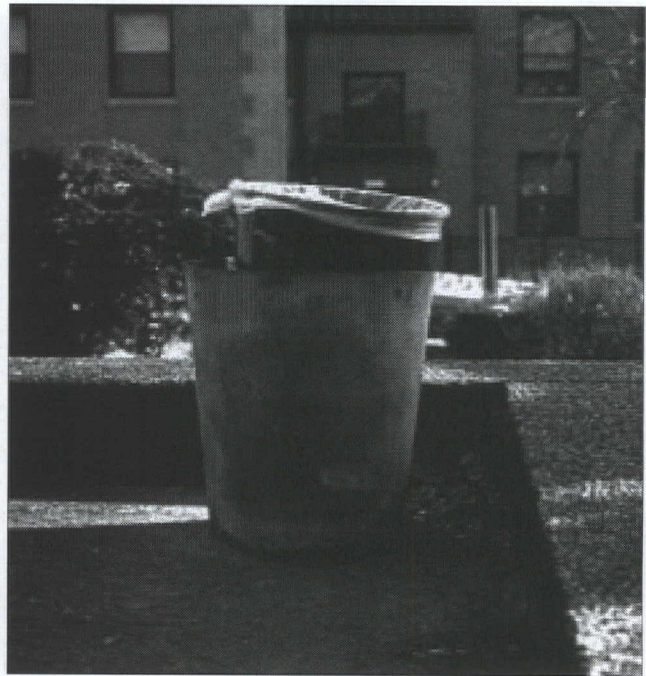


Figure 239: Plastic trash can near the Buchanan Memorial, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

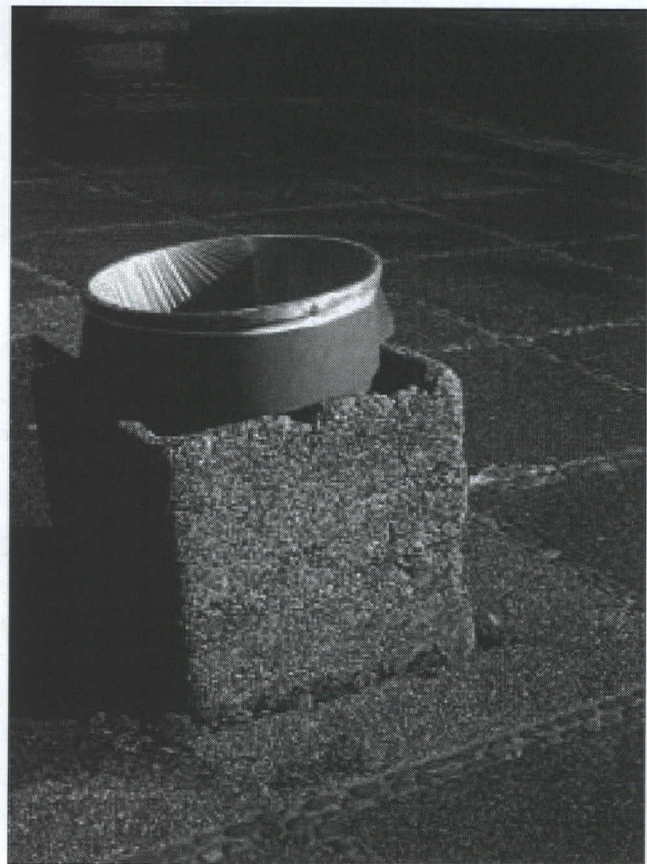


Figure 240: Two exposed aggregate trash receptacles located on the lower plaza are most likely not original to the park, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Although the drinking fountains served a functional purpose, they also reflect the careful attention to detail and planning that went into the park. Horace Peaslee designed the fountains to complement other park features, by using the same exposed aggregate concrete found throughout the park and incorporating some of the classical design motifs found in other water features in the park, such as the shell motif used in the 16th Street niche fountain. Peaslee also designed the drinking fountains to be sanitary: instead of a vertical jet of water, he designed a lateral jet so that contaminated water would not flow back into water nozzle.

The 1966 Cobb and Youssef report discussed problems with the operation of the fountains.² Their existing conditions photographs show that the original fountains were still in place in 1966.³ The fountains in place today are standard National Park Service concrete units. It is not known when these were installed, although it was clearly later than 1966. These units sit on a small foundation pad, flush to the ground, (see figure 242), making it difficult for children to reach the water nozzle, nor are they universally accessible. These replacement units occupy five of the six original fountain locations. (see plan sheet 45). The sixth original fountain location was in front of the lodge where there is no fountain today (see figure 244).



Figure 241: The original drinking fountains, circa 1936, featured an ornamental shell bowl, cast in concrete, which sat on top of an exposed aggregate pedestal (RCP-CRF, October, 1936)

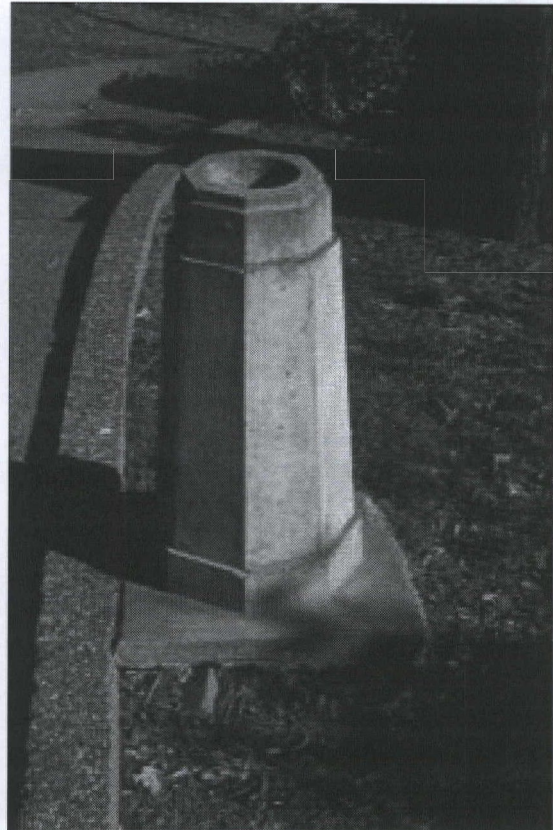


Figure 242: National Park Service pedestal style fountains, developed for use as a standard in the early years of the National Capital Parks, have replaced original units, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

² Cobb and Youssef, p. 32.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.



Figure 243: Drinking fountain with decorative raised step for children (RCP-CRF, c. September 21, 1936).



Figure 244: A drinking fountain was originally located in front of the lodge. No unit exists in this location today



Figure 246: Today, a contemporary drinking fountain occupies the historic location of the original unit at the top of the stepped ramp, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 245: A drinking fountain was located near the top of the 16th Street entrance to the park, adjacent to the mall. Note the hedges enclosing a play area, on the left. (RCP-CRF, c. March 24, 1945).

The replacement drinking fountains are all fully operational although many suffer from broken foundations and other aesthetic defects (see plan sheets 38-41).

3.5.10 Watering and Drainage Systems

Quick Couplers

The park's watering system today consists of NPS standard "quick couplers," located at regular intervals throughout the park. Quick couplers are key-operated valved hose connections set flush to the ground in twelve inch square concrete pads. It is not known when they were installed.

Sanitary Drainage

Originally the park's sanitary drainage systems served men's and women's toilet rooms located at the lodge north of Chapin Street on the east side of the mall and toilet rooms located in the spaces under the great terrace stairs. Both sets of toilet rooms connected to a 12" sewer line in 15th Street.⁴

Presumably, the sanitary line serving the lodge was capped when the toilet rooms there were removed, but could be re-opened if toilet rooms were again installed at that location.

Storm Drainage: Gutters and Grates

Not surprisingly, in this park where so much was so carefully and thoroughly studied, sub-surface and surface drainage was also considered in great detail. It appears that the landscape firm of Vitale, Brinckerhoff & Geiffert, hired in 1919 to prepare the first comprehensive planting plan for the park, accompanied their planting plans with highly detailed drainage plans. The one examined, for "Section 3" including the area of the park from the great terrace north to the Chapin Street cross axis, shows sub-surface rings of agricultural tile at every single tree, all draining directly to sewer lines or to broken stone drainage areas, hence to catch basins and sewer lines.

Complementing this degree of concern for sub-surface drainage, were the provisions made for surface drainage. Substantial concrete gutters are located along walks in the lower park and behind retaining walls throughout the park. The gutters direct water away from the backs of the retaining walls and may have contributed to the long life of these typically failure-prone ele-

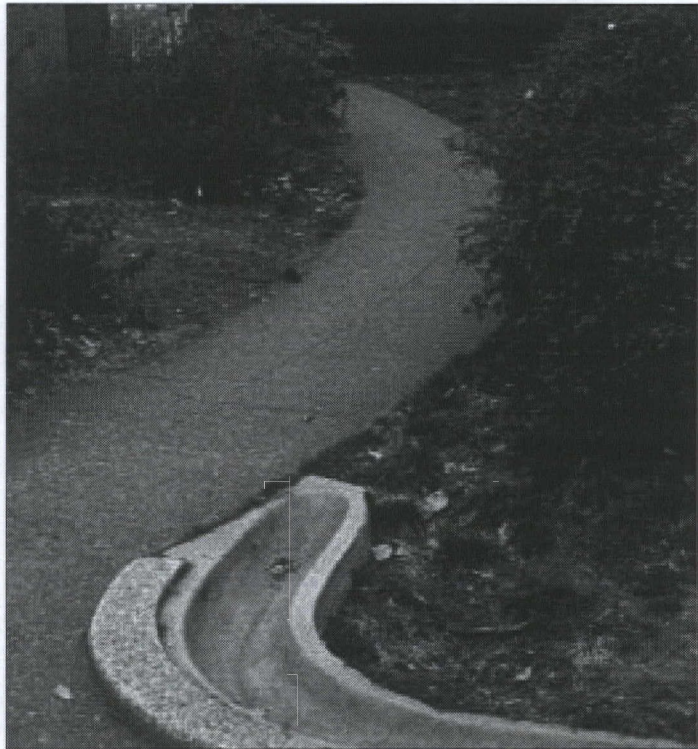


Figure 247: Concrete gutters were strategically positioned throughout the park to capture storm water runoff from walkways and non-paved areas, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

4 Cobb and Youssef, p. 20.

ments by eliminating a source of deterioration: charging of earth behind the walls with moisture that hastens deterioration of the concrete by freeze-thaw mechanisms or by corrosion of reinforcing steel or that overloads the walls structurally. These extensive gutters at the retaining walls may have contributed to efflorescence and other concrete problems, however, where piping and connections have failed, concentrating water at just the locations the systems were designed to direct water away from. It appears that control of surface water at the tops of the retaining walls throughout the park, combined with foundation drains at the retaining walls, was used in lieu of weep holes, totally absent in the walls of the park.

The extensive gutters along walks in the lower section of the park (see figures 248 and 249), particularly the hillside gardens, appear to be excessive. One would not normally expect great sheets of water from the heavily planted areas of the park, covered as they were with ground covers in many cases.

Survey of subsurface elements was not part of this project. However, the 1966 Cobb and Youssef report described the storm drainage system for the park as consisting of two sections. One drains the great terrace and lower park, discharging into a 15 inch sewer main in W Street. The upper section of the park is drained by a 10 inch line leaving the park at its northwest corner and draining into the Euclid Street drainage system. The foundation drains and drains from the fountains are also connected into this drainage system.⁵ The 1997 *Existing Conditions Survey* of the site by Greenhorne & O'Mara shows surface and subsurface elements of the site drainage systems.

See plan sheet 44 and the photographs in this section for locations and visible elements of drainage systems in the park.

a. As Built

"Catch basins," 14" square, are called out in the grassed areas of the mall in the upper park on the various construction drawings for the park. They are installed immediately adjacent to the diverging mall walks, in the grass. Two, at the northern end of the walks, originally in grass, are now located in triangular paving added at the inside corners of the mall walks where

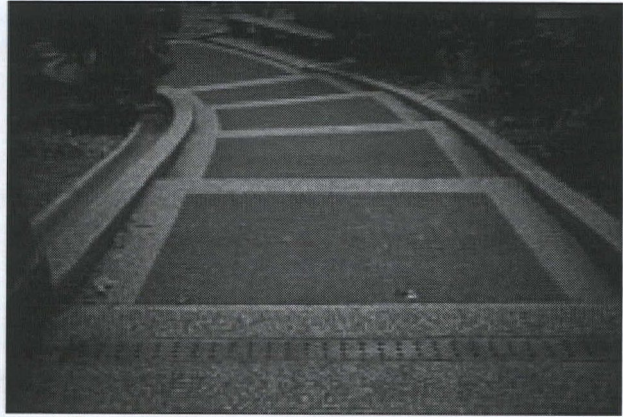


Figure 248: Narrow trench drains captured runoff from walkways, such as the east ascent, 1997. Drain cover visible above is non-original (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 249: Concrete gutters line the edge of walkways throughout much of the hillside gardens, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

5 Cobb and Youssef, pp. 20-21.

they intersect the cross walk from the upper 16th Street park entrance (see figure 250). The catch basins located along the mall were in place by November of 1927, as indicated on a survey of the park conducted by the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks (National Archives, RG 79, File 41-87).

As might be expected, gutters, trench drains, and catch basins are densely located in the heavily built areas of the park. As originally constructed, the drain inlets, and even some covers at cleanouts, were cast brass. The current site survey found only four brass inlets still present: curved ones around the circular planting area at the former site of the armillary sphere. To judge from the original covers still in place, the inlet covers used throughout the site must have been quite lovely and very much in keeping with the high level of finish and quality at the site in general. The great tensile strength of brass allowed a delicacy in the cross bars and their spacing not possible in cast iron. Brass also acquires a pleasing greenish patina. Apparently the original brass inlet covers in the park were stolen by vandals.

b. Existing Conditions

An evaluation of the integrity of the park's drainage system must include two basic components: the visible elements and the functioning of the system.

The visible elements of the park's drainage system are of two types, the extensive concrete gutters and the various types of drain inlets including catch basins located in grass, inlets located in paved areas, and extensive trench drains in paved areas.

The concrete gutters throughout the park appear to be in good condition.

The drain inlets, except for the four original inlet covers noted above, have lost their integrity. Almost all of the inlet covers are non-original of several different types and designs. A common replacement cover is thick steel plate with round holes. Other inlets are cast iron, contoured or flat.

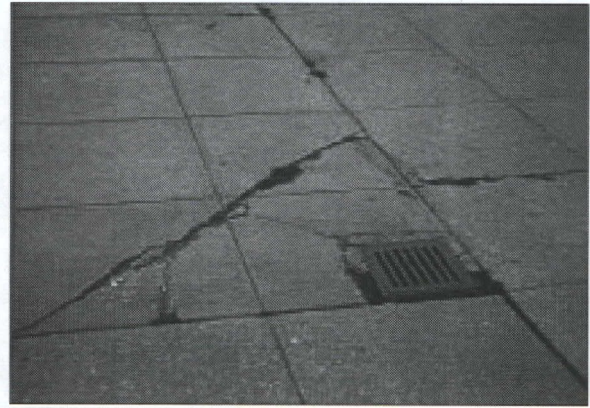


Figure 250: Two small square drain inlets, original locations, are located today in pavement at the triangular sections of paving added after completion of the park. Before addition of the pavement, the original locations of these drains were in the grass, 1977. (Land Ethics, Inc.)



Figure 251: Small square drain inlets were located along the edge of the mall walkways, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

The functioning of the drainage system of the park was not evaluated in this report. However, it is clear from visual examination that settlement has left many of the drain inlets in the park, in both paved and grassed areas, higher than their catchment areas. This is a particular problem on the great terrace where the most settlement has occurred leaving fairly substantial low areas undrained, which may contribute to additional settlement or leakage of surface water into the underground spaces under the great terrace stairs.

The 1966 Cobb and Youssef report stated that many of the inlet covers in the park were welded to their frames⁶ making it essentially impossible to clean out drains. Photographs in the report appear to indicate the welded grates were the brass ones, probably welded in an attempt to deter their theft. Today's steel inlet covers and grates are not welded to their frames.

Relative to the functioning of sub-surface elements of the drainage system, after observing that the park's "storm system has been in service since the opening of its different sections, and may date back as far as the early 1920's,"⁷ the Cobb and Youssef report continues to describe their investigation of the piping. "A representative section of piping was removed from the existing storm drainage system and inspected. It was found that in excess of 60 percent of the free area of the pipe was blocked with deposits [that] have accumulated during the years. The deposits are soft in nature and could easily be cleaned by mechanical means. However, these deposits are seriously restricting the flow of storm water at the present time."⁸

If the park's drainage lines have not been cleaned since the 1966 evaluation, one hopes the deposits are still "soft in nature" to allow them to be cleaned from the system.

3.5.11 Lighting

While the record on many aspects of decision making during the design and construction of Meridian Hill Park is volumi-



Figure 252: Light standard, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.)

6 Cobb and Youssef, p. 21.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 22.



Figure 253: Close-up view of light standard and fixture, 1996, (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 254: Light standard circa 1936 along east ascent (RCP-CRF, c. 1936)

nous, the record on lighting is sparse. In their 1966 report, Cobb and Youssef speculate that the years the park was being designed were early in the utilization of electricity for relatively high levels of outdoor lighting for safety and decorative effect, thus explaining both the rather minimal lighting of the park and the relative lack of innovation and drama seen in the park's lighting compared to the concrete work and the fountains, for example.

At any rate, the light standards and their locations as present in 1936 continue today, except for the shifting of the standards along the mall inward and the increases in wattage achieved in the fixtures over the original wattages (see plan sheet 43). While all the housings for the fixtures recessed in the exposed aggregate concrete work are still present, none of the actual fixtures are operable. Furthermore, 1966 photographs of these fixtures illustrate these fixtures as extremely outdated by today's standards. Photographs show the fixtures consisting of a pair of porcelain sockets with two incandescent light bulbs. The copper hoods, installed to reduce the fixtures' glare, were also rather ad hoc.

Although there was some discussion about lighting water and other features before completion of the park and its official opening in 1936, nothing was implemented. Later, various experiments and a great deal of further discussion about decorative lighting occurred, but again

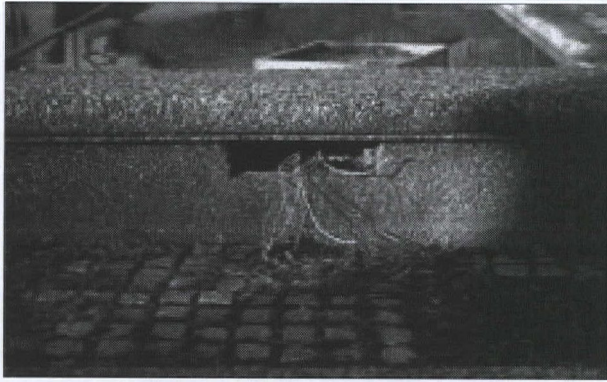


Figure 255: Recessed wall fixture along the edge of the reflecting pool. None of these lights in the lower gardens are presently working, 1996, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

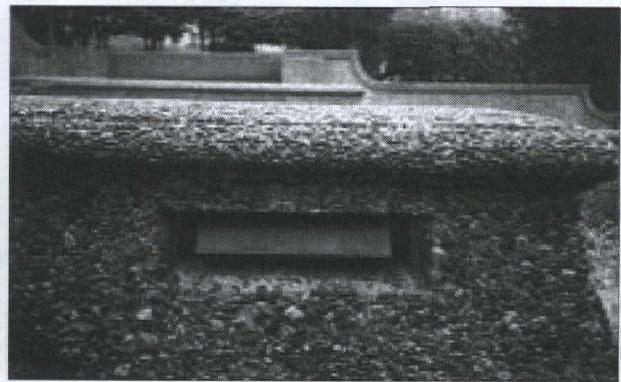


Figure 256: Recessed wall lighting fixture with hood (presumably installed after recommended by the CFA in 1939, in response to a 24 October 1939 Peaslee memo) along cascade walkway, 1996, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

nothing was implemented. There were, apparently two camps on the question of lighting the fountains, those who were in favor, seeing it as a way to enhance one of the stunning features of the park and those who feared the creation of a carnival atmosphere.

See plan sheet 43 for the locations of the various forms of lighting used in the park.

a. As Built

Light Standards

The light standards were installed in the park in 1936 by the Potomac Electric Power Company.⁹ “These fixtures consist of Union Metal Company steel poles, (their catalog No. 9047), with ‘Saratoga’ luminaires having either glass, GE No. 204-CRI or plastic, Plastics Inc. Number 8144 globes.”¹⁰

Recessed Lights

Recessed light fixtures were used to illuminate many of the walkways in the lower park, including the stairs descending the great terrace; the walkways lining either side of the cascade; the curved walkways leading from the cascade to the lower plaza; and the low retaining wall of the reflecting pool. These fixtures were cast into the exposed aggregate walls, railings, and pool edges and placed fairly close to the ground to illuminate some of the numerous steps of the park (see figures 255 and 256). “These are equipped with a double lampholder for two 15 or 25 watt lamps and were originally equipped with wire glass lenses...long since destroyed...which have been rereplaced by metal shields. Copper shades were apparently added after 1939¹¹ to direct the light downward for illumination without glare.

⁹ Lighting Plan, National Archives, RG 79, File 41.6-74.

¹⁰ Cobb and Youssef, p. 15.

¹¹ CFA minutes, 17 November 1939.



Figure 257: Chandelier at 16th Street entrance, 1996, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

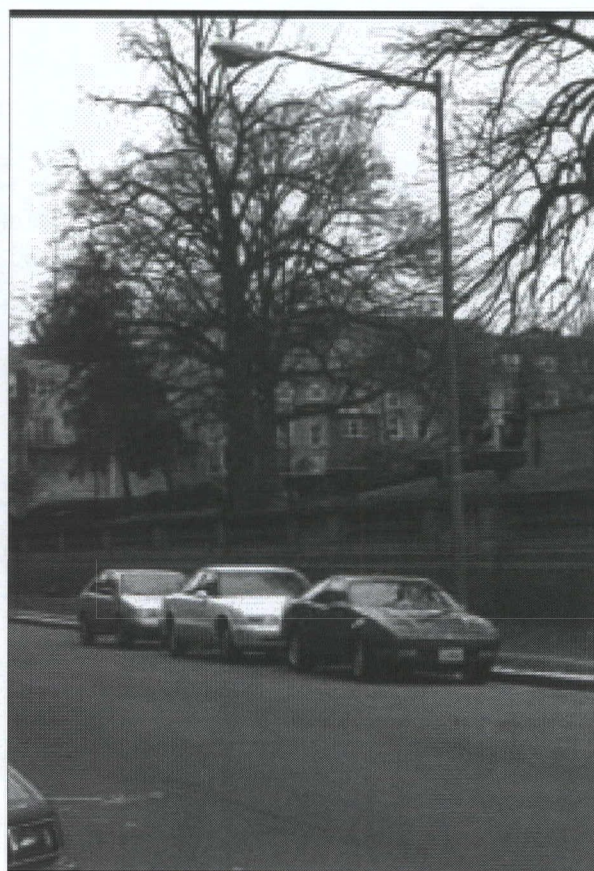


Figure 258: Goose-neck style city street light standard located along W Street, 1997, (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Chandeliers

A large, decorative chandelier lighted the interior of the main entrance to the park on 16th Street (see figure 257).

Two decorative owl fixtures were designed (see figure 65) for the vestibules to the spaces under the great terrace stairs.

b. Existing Conditions

The Potomac Electric Power Company revised the walkway lighting in 1956, replacing all existing lights and installing new posts and post-top lights throughout the park.¹² These new post-top lights were accurate copies of the originals. In 1982, NPS increased the wattage in the fixtures with a Section 106 review and approval.¹³ In 1985, the National Park Service replaced

12 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

13 Work proposed for Federal property or expenditure of Federal funds on properties listed on the National Register or eligible for listing must be reviewed for its conformance with the requirements of the 1966 Historic Preservation Act. This is known as "Section 106 Review." Even before its designation as a National Historic Landmark, this review was required, and has been done by the NPS, for any work at Meridian Hill

rusted-out lamp standards with new units, matching the previous ones. As part of that project, the rows of standards along the upper mall were moved inward to cast more light on the walks. The project was reviewed and approved in accord with Section 106 of the 1966 Historic Preservation Act.¹⁴

In 1993, the Friends group submitted a conceptual design for lighting the cascades and other water features.¹⁵ It was not further developed because it was determined the design would damage historic fabric.

Lighting in the park today is provided by 53 post-top light standards. While many of the post-top lamps have cracked or broken globes, they are all currently working.

The same cannot be said for the recessed wall lights, none of which is in working order. In 1966, the Cobb and Youseff report estimated that 50% of these fixtures were working.¹⁶ Vandalism and conduit corrosion have taken their toll on these lights, and most are missing lenses and have bare wires exposed to the elements (see plan sheets 38-41). These recessed fixtures, along with the conduit, need to be completely rehabilitated. The light in the chandelier in the 16th Street entrance to the park was in working order at the time of the field survey, and the glass of the chandelier was intact although the fixture is rusted and in need of restoration.

By 1966, as can be seen in photographs,¹⁷ the owl fixtures were still in place although not intact. They are no longer in place.

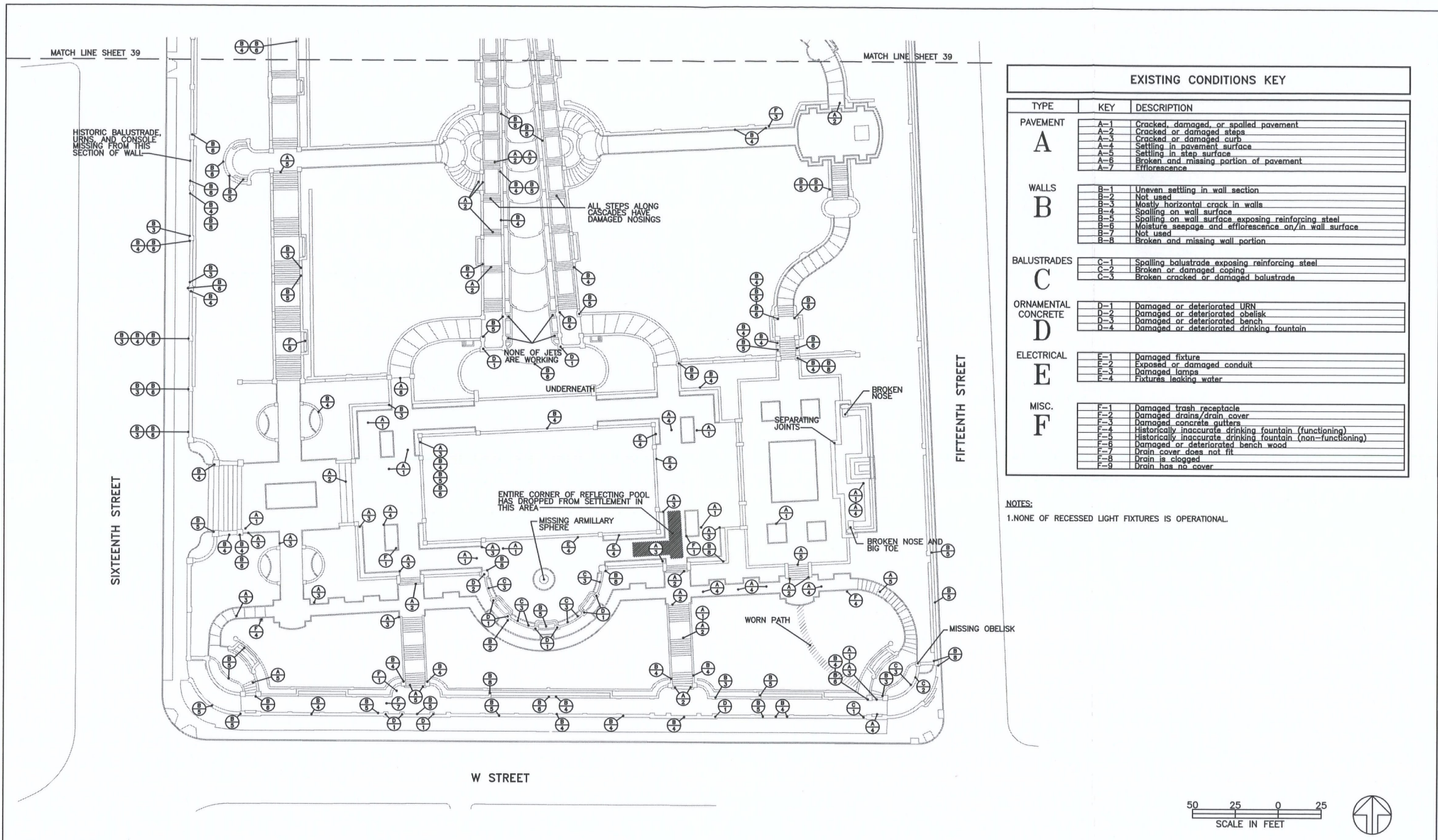
Park that has the potential to affect the historic resource.

14 Robert Stanton, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, to Robert Garvey, Jr., Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 12 March 1985.

15 Light'n Up, Proposed Lighting Scheme for Meridian Hill Park, February 1992. RCP-CRF.

16 Cobb and Youssef, p. 17.

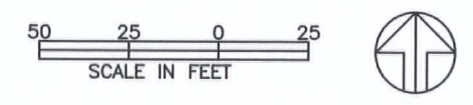
17 *Ibid.*, fig. 12, p. 43.



EXISTING CONDITIONS KEY

TYPE	KEY	DESCRIPTION
PAVEMENT A	A-1	Cracked, damaged, or spalled pavement
	A-2	Cracked or damaged steps
	A-3	Cracked or damaged curb
	A-4	Settling in pavement surface
	A-5	Settling in step surface
	A-6	Broken and missing portion of pavement
	A-7	Efflorescence
WALLS B	B-1	Uneven settling in wall section
	B-2	Not used
	B-3	Mostly horizontal crack in walls
	B-4	Spalling on wall surface
	B-5	Spalling on wall surface exposing reinforcing steel
	B-6	Moisture seepage and efflorescence on/in wall surface
	B-7	Not used
	B-8	Broken and missing wall portion
BALUSTRADES C	C-1	Spalling balustrade exposing reinforcing steel
	C-2	Broken or damaged coping
	C-3	Broken cracked or damaged balustrade
ORNAMENTAL CONCRETE D	D-1	Damaged or deteriorated URN
	D-2	Damaged or deteriorated obelisk
	D-3	Damaged or deteriorated bench
	D-4	Damaged or deteriorated drinking fountain
ELECTRICAL E	E-1	Damaged fixture
	E-2	Exposed or damaged conduit
	E-3	Damaged lamps
	E-4	Fixtures leaking water
MISC. F	F-1	Damaged trash receptacle
	F-2	Damaged drains/drain cover
	F-3	Damaged concrete gutters
	F-4	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (functioning)
	F-5	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (non-functioning)
	F-6	Damaged or deteriorated bench wood
	F-7	Drain cover does not fit
	F-8	Drain is clogged
	F-9	Drain has no cover

NOTES:
1. NONE OF RECESSED LIGHT FIXTURES IS OPERATIONAL.



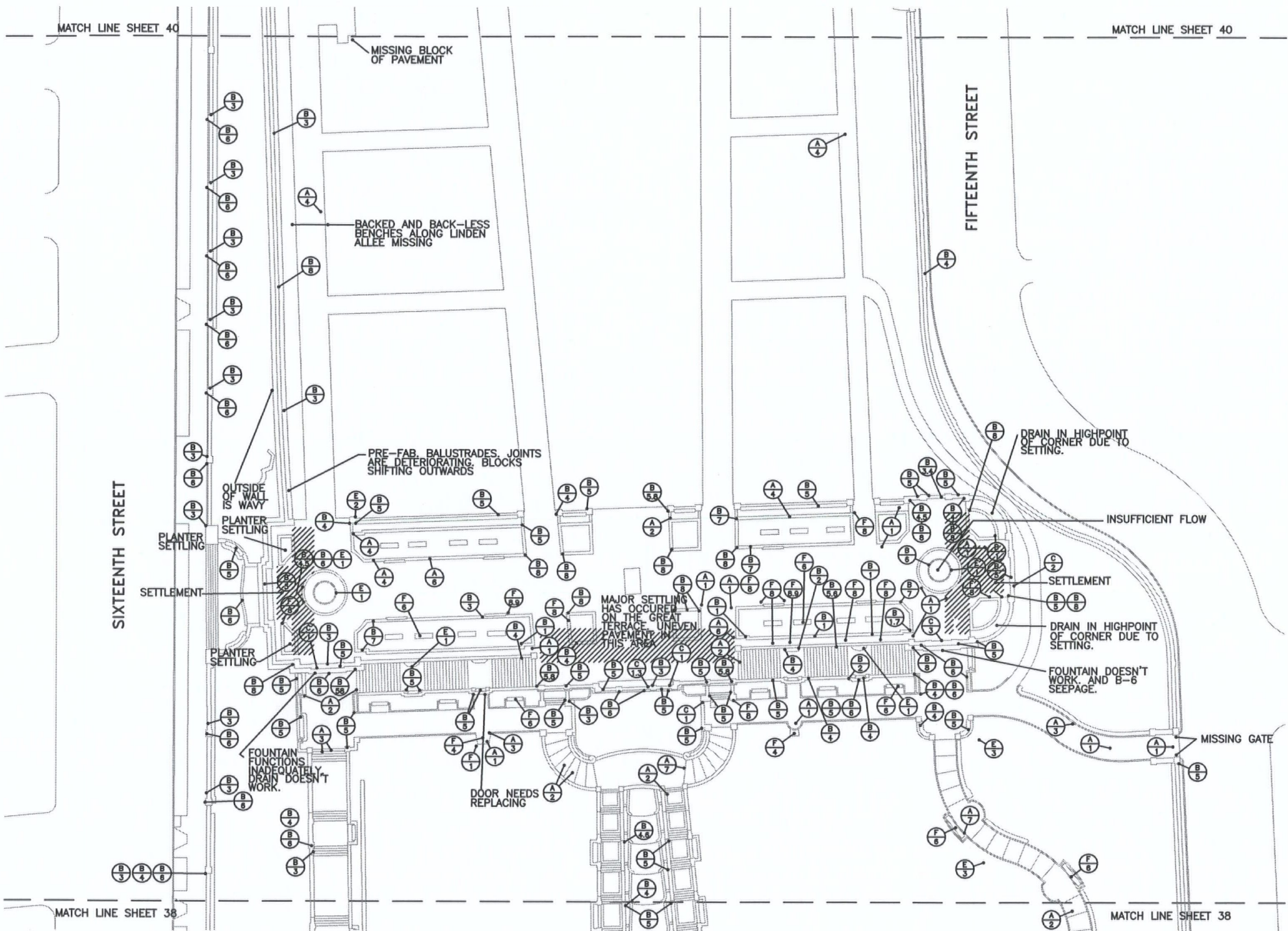
MERIDIAN HILL PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.
Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

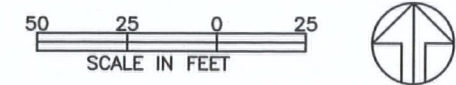
DATE:
7-1-99
DRAWN BY:
MACS

EXISTING CONDITIONS 1
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 38



EXISTING CONDITIONS KEY		
TYPE	KEY	DESCRIPTION
PAVEMENT A	A-1	Cracked, damaged, or spalled pavement
	A-2	Cracked or damaged steps
	A-3	Cracked or damaged curb
	A-4	Settling in pavement surface
	A-5	Settling in step surface
	A-6	Broken and missing portion of pavement
	A-7	Efflorescence
WALLS B	B-1	Uneven settling in wall section
	B-2	Not used
	B-3	Mostly horizontal crack in walls
	B-4	Spalling on wall surface
	B-5	Spalling on wall surface exposing reinforcing steel
	B-6	Moisture seepage and efflorescence on/in wall surface
	B-7	Not used
	B-8	Broken and missing wall portion
BALUSTRADES C	C-1	Spalling balustrade exposing reinforcing steel
	C-2	Broken or damaged coping
	C-3	Broken cracked or damaged balustrade
ORNAMENTAL CONCRETE D	D-1	Damaged or deteriorated URN
	D-2	Damaged or deteriorated obelisk
	D-3	Damaged or deteriorated bench
	D-4	Damaged or deteriorated drinking fountain
ELECTRICAL E	E-1	Damaged fixture
	E-2	Exposed or damaged conduit
	E-3	Damaged lamps
	E-4	Fixtures leaking water
MISC. F	F-1	Damaged trash receptacle
	F-2	Damaged drains/drain cover
	F-3	Damaged concrete gutters
	F-4	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (functioning)
	F-5	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (non-functioning)
	F-6	Damaged or deteriorated bench wood
	F-7	Drain cover does not fit
	F-8	Drain is clogged
	F-9	Drain has no cover



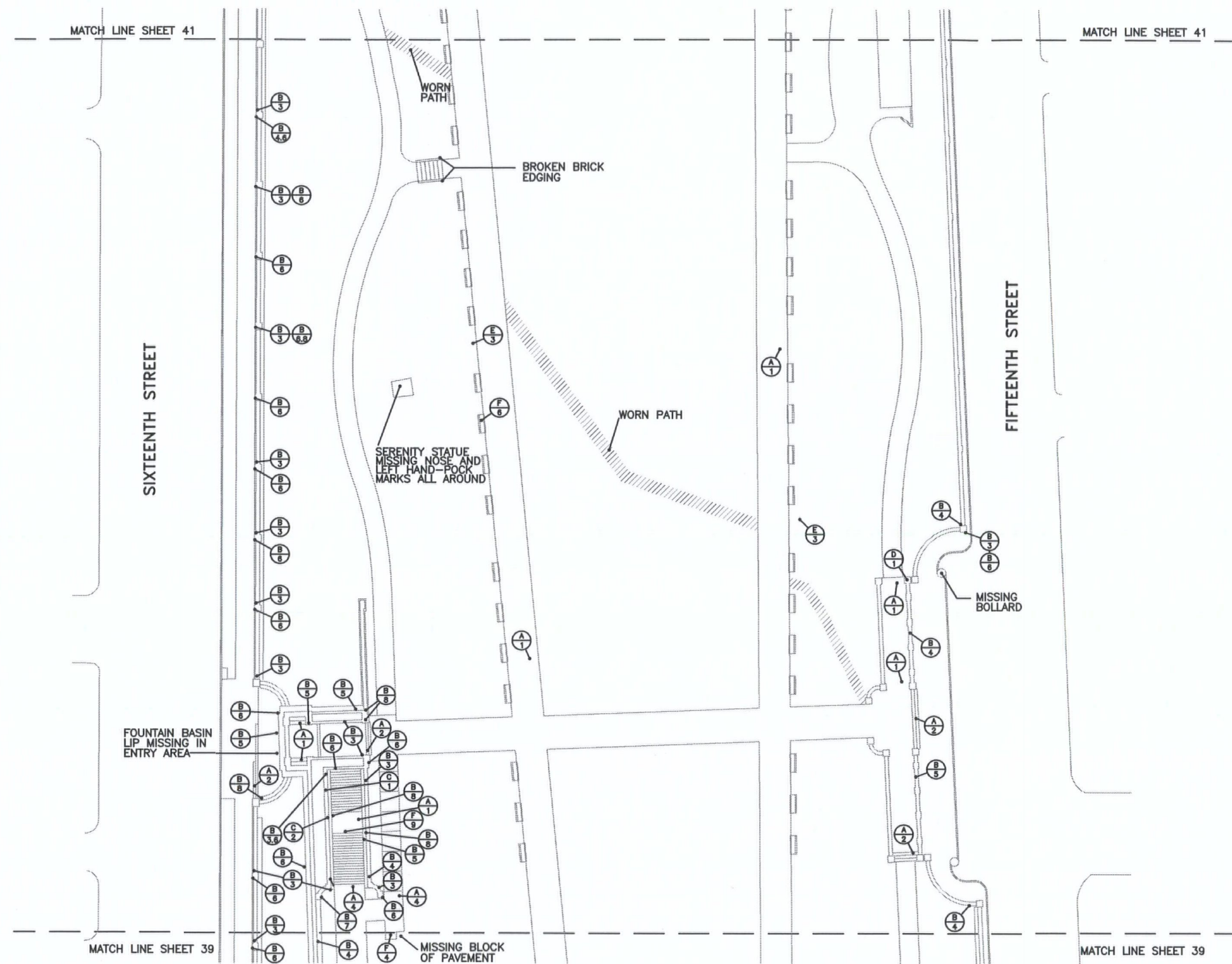
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

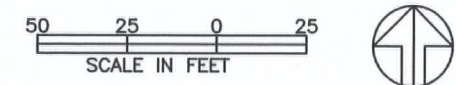
National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE: 7-1-99	EXISTING CONDITIONS 2	DRAWING NO. 872 87141
DRAWN BY: MACS		SHEET 39
MERIDIAN HILL PARK		



EXISTING CONDITIONS KEY		
TYPE	KEY	DESCRIPTION
PAVEMENT A	A-1	Cracked, damaged, or spalled pavement
	A-2	Cracked or damaged steps
	A-3	Cracked or damaged curb
	A-4	Settling in pavement surface
	A-5	Settling in step surface
	A-6	Broken and missing portion of pavement
	A-7	Efflorescence
WALLS B	B-1	Uneven settling in wall section
	B-2	Not used
	B-3	Mostly horizontal crack in walls
	B-4	Spalling on wall surface
	B-5	Spalling on wall surface exposing reinforcing steel
	B-6	Moisture seepage and efflorescence on/in wall surface
	B-7	Not used
	B-8	Broken and missing wall portion
BALUSTRADES C	C-1	Spalling balustrade exposing reinforcing steel
	C-2	Broken or damaged coping
	C-3	Broken cracked or damaged balustrade
ORNAMENTAL CONCRETE D	D-1	Damaged or deteriorated URN
	D-2	Damaged or deteriorated obelisk
	D-3	Damaged or deteriorated bench
	D-4	Damaged or deteriorated drinking fountain
ELECTRICAL E	E-1	Damaged fixture
	E-2	Exposed or damaged conduit
	E-3	Damaged lamps
	E-4	Fixtures leaking water
MISC. F	F-1	Damaged trash receptacle
	F-2	Damaged drains/drain cover
	F-3	Damaged concrete gutters
	F-4	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (functioning)
	F-5	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (non-functioning)
	F-6	Damaged or deteriorated bench wood
	F-7	Drain cover does not fit
	F-8	Drain is clogged
	F-9	Drain has no cover



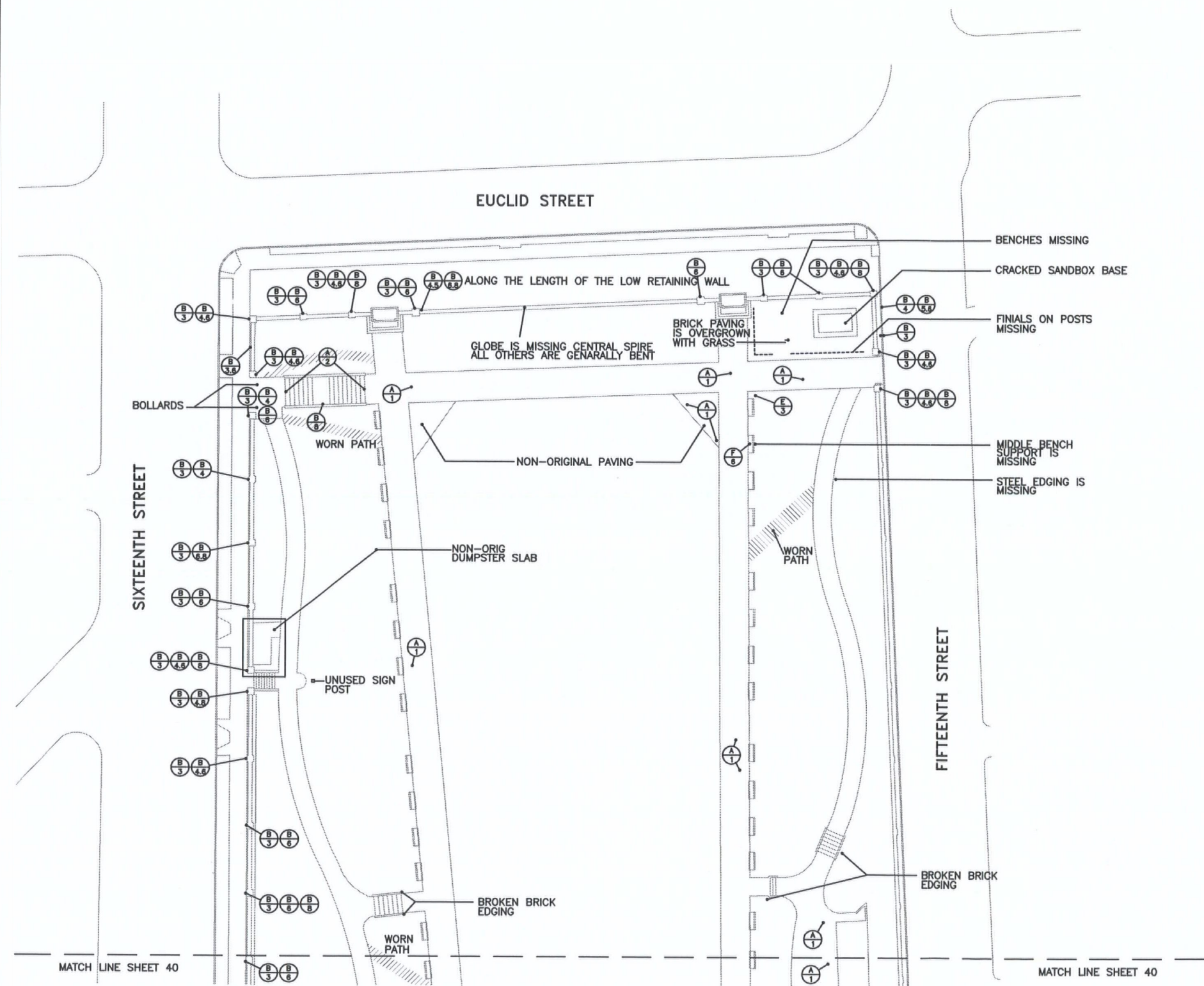
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE: 7-1-99	EXISTING CONDITIONS 3	DRAWING NO. 872 87141
DRAWN BY: MACS		SHEET 40
MERIDIAN HILL PARK		



EXISTING CONDITIONS KEY

TYPE	KEY	DESCRIPTION
PAVEMENT A	A-1	Cracked, damaged, or spalled pavement
	A-2	Cracked or damaged steps
	A-3	Cracked or damaged curb
	A-4	Settling in pavement surface
	A-5	Settling in step surface
	A-6	Broken and missing portion of pavement
	A-7	Efflorescence
WALLS B	B-1	Uneven settling in wall section
	B-2	Not used
	B-3	Mostly horizontal crack in walls
	B-4	Spalling on wall surface
	B-5	Spalling on wall surface exposing reinforcing steel
	B-6	Moisture seepage and efflorescence on/in wall surface
	B-7	Not used
	B-8	Broken and missing wall portion
BALUSTRADES C	C-1	Spalling balustrade exposing reinforcing steel
	C-2	Broken or damaged coping
	C-3	Broken cracked or damaged balustrade
ORNAMENTAL CONCRETE D	D-1	Damaged or deteriorated URN
	D-2	Damaged or deteriorated obelisk
	D-3	Damaged or deteriorated bench
	D-4	Damaged or deteriorated drinking fountain
ELECTRICAL E	E-1	Damaged fixture
	E-2	Exposed or damaged conduit
	E-3	Damaged lamps
	E-4	Fixtures leaking water
MISC. F	F-1	Damaged trash receptacle
	F-2	Damaged drains/drain cover
	F-3	Damaged concrete gutters
	F-4	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (functioning)
	F-5	Historically inaccurate drinking fountain (non-functioning)
	F-6	Damaged or deteriorated bench wood
	F-7	Drain cover does not fit
	F-8	Drain is clogged
	F-9	Drain has no cover

50 25 0 25
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service — National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

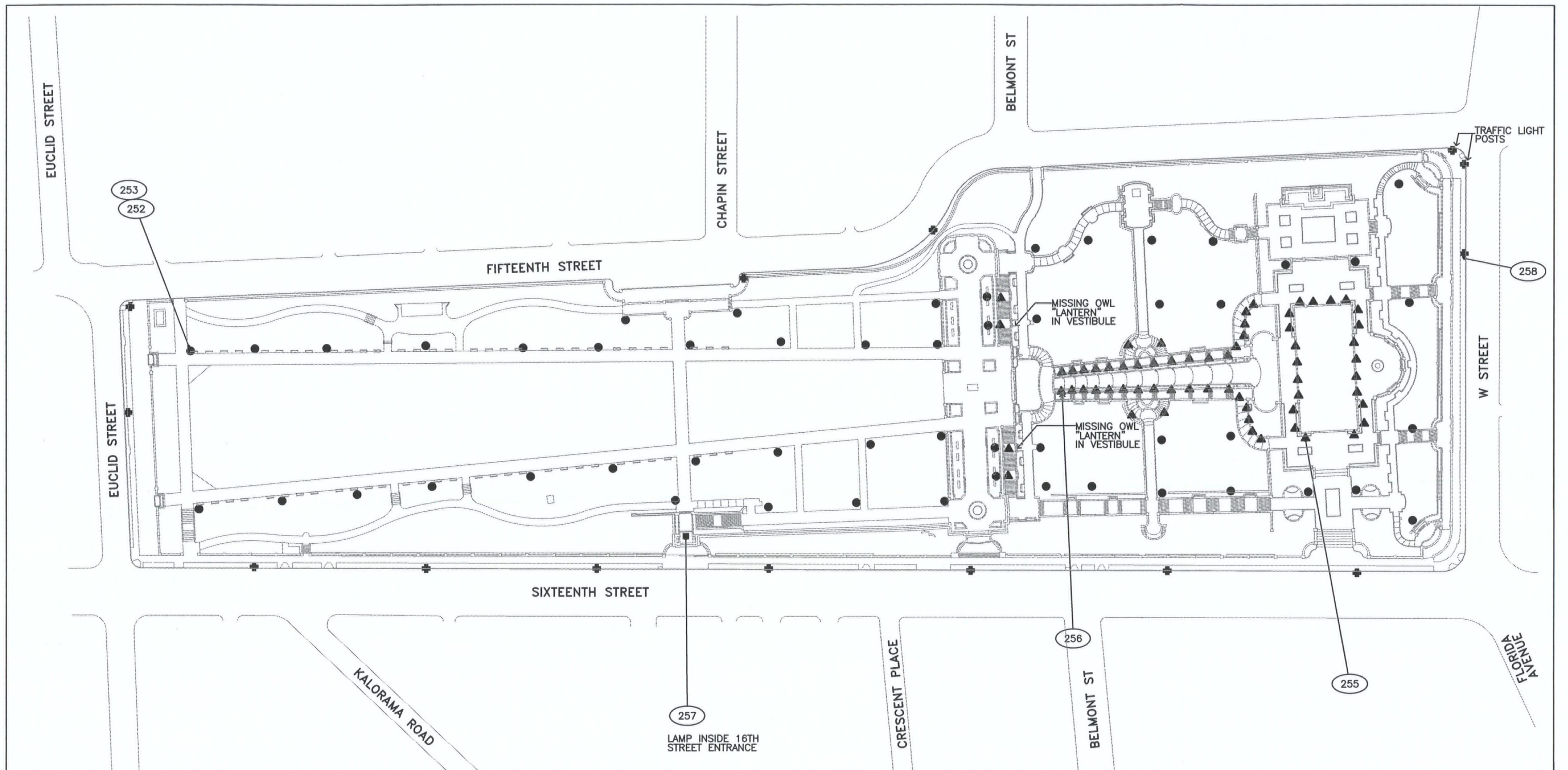
DRAWN BY:
MACS

EXISTING
CONDITIONS 4

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141

SHEET 41



- KEY
- CHANDELIER
 - LIGHT STANDARD
 - ▲ RECESSED LIGHTS
 - ✦ MODERN CITY STREET LAMP
 - XX PHOTOGRAPHIC FIGURES

50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

1997
LIGHT
FIXTURES
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 43

3.6 Utilities

Utilities at Meridian Hill Park include:

- sanitary drainage systems serving the park's restrooms
- city water serving the park's fountains, toilet rooms, watering system, and drinking fountains
- electrical service serving park lighting, power, and mechanical systems.

Storm and Sanitary Drainage

(See section 3.5.10 Watering and Drainage Systems.)

Water

City water is supplied to the park as described in the 1966 Cobb and Youssef report, a four inch main from 16th Street serving the lower park and a two inch main from Euclid Street serving the upper park. "Generally, city water distribution is done by means of underground cast iron piping."¹

Elements of the park served by city water are described in sections 3.5.3 Water Features, 3.5.9 Drinking Fountains, and 3.5.10 Watering and Drainage Systems.

Electrical

(See section 3.5.11 Lighting for descriptions and locations of the standards, recessed lighting, and chandeliers at the site.)

As Cobb and Youssef pointed out in their 1966 report, use of electricity was relatively new as the park was being designed so its use for lighting and power was minimal in the earliest constructed parts of the park:

"The original plans, covering the area from Euclid Street on the north to the Great Terrace overlooking what was to be the Cascades and Reflecting Pool below, included virtually no provision for electrical installation...later, about 1930, when the final design of the Cascades and Re-

1 Cobb and Youssef, p. 30-31.

flecting Pool was made, electricity had become an important utility and many more appliances using it were available.”²

Whereas the upper park was lighted in a straightforward way with light standards, recessed walk lights were cast into the concrete in the lower park in addition to the use of light standards in planting areas. As might be expected in the early years of the use of a technology, the fixtures themselves were rather primitive consisting merely of a cast iron box with what appear in photographs from 1966 to be a pair of porcelain sockets for two small incandescent bulbs with a glass cover. Soon after installation copper hoods were installed to direct the light downward to the walking surfaces and reduce glare. Peaslee designed two charming light fixtures for the vestibules outside the restrooms under the great terrace stairs (see figure 65) “made of carefully wrought metal filegree [sic] depicting small animals, leaves and branches forming a basket in which was placed a glass globe containing an incandescent lamp. These are quite unique, and what remains of them is still lovely, albeit insufficient from a photometric standpoint.”³

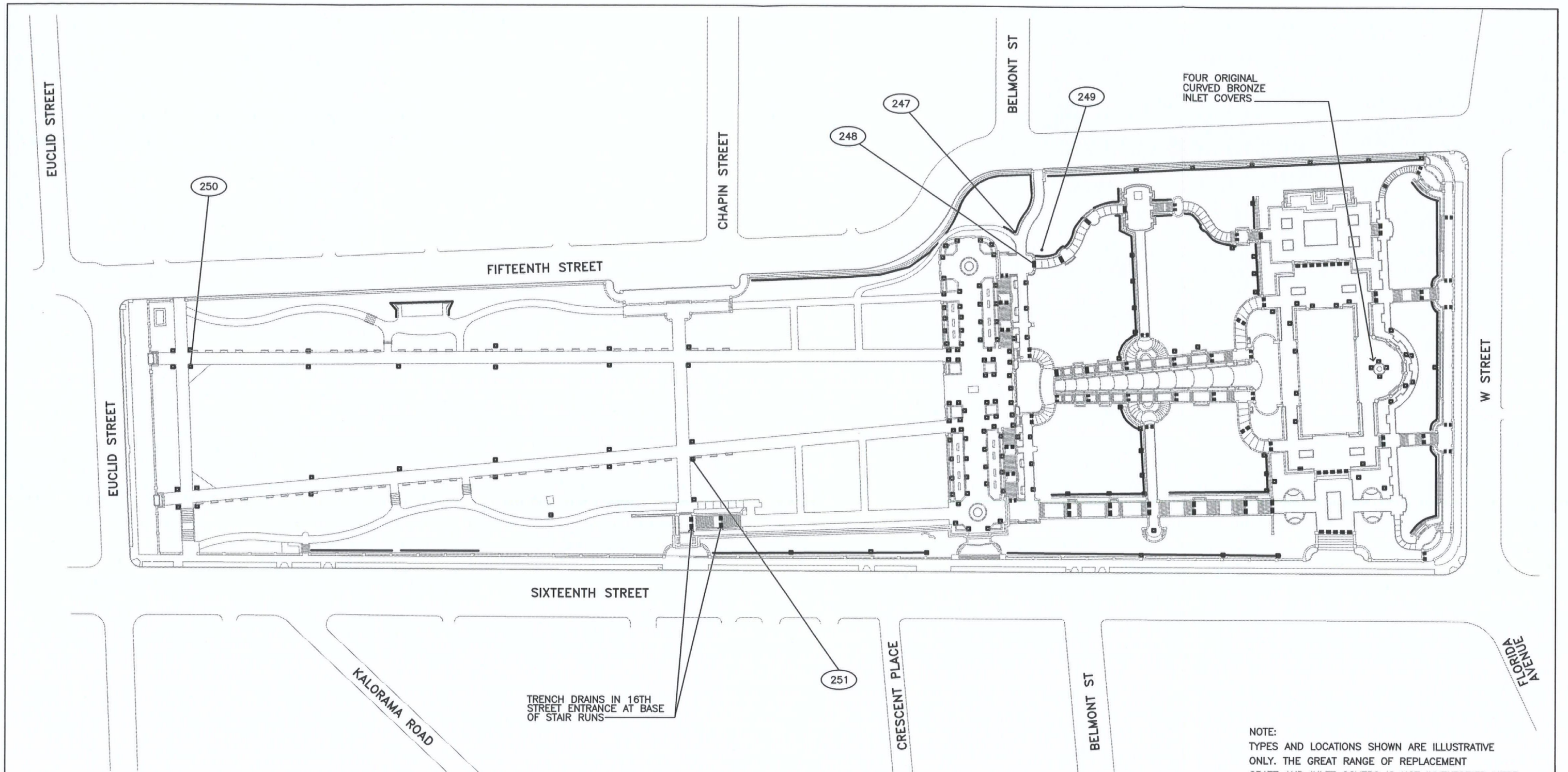
Today, there are several electrical distribution boxes in the park for special event use: one at the northern end of the park near Euclid Street and one at the great terrace. They are not original to the park but it is not known when these were installed.

Power has always been provided to the park for site lighting, the operation of the pumps for the water features, and for use in the various spaces such as the restrooms and the Park Police office. At one time the light standards were maintained by PEPCO⁴ and the power to operate them was paid for by the city, but today all the power used in the park is paid for by the NPS. Over the years, power has been routed through various transformers in different locations.

2 Cobb and Youssef, p. 7.

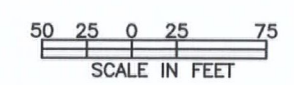
3 *Ibid.*

4 Cobb and Youssef, p. 8.



NOTE:
 TYPES AND LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE ILLUSTRATIVE
 ONLY. THE GREAT RANGE OF REPLACEMENT
 GRATE AND INLET COVERS IS NOT INVENTORIED HERE.

- KEY**
- CATCH BASIN/DRAIN INLET
 - CONCRETE GUTTERS
 - TRENCH DRAINS
 - XX PHOTOGRAPHIC FIGURE



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service — National Capital Region
 15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
 Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
 Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
 Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
 Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
 7-1-99

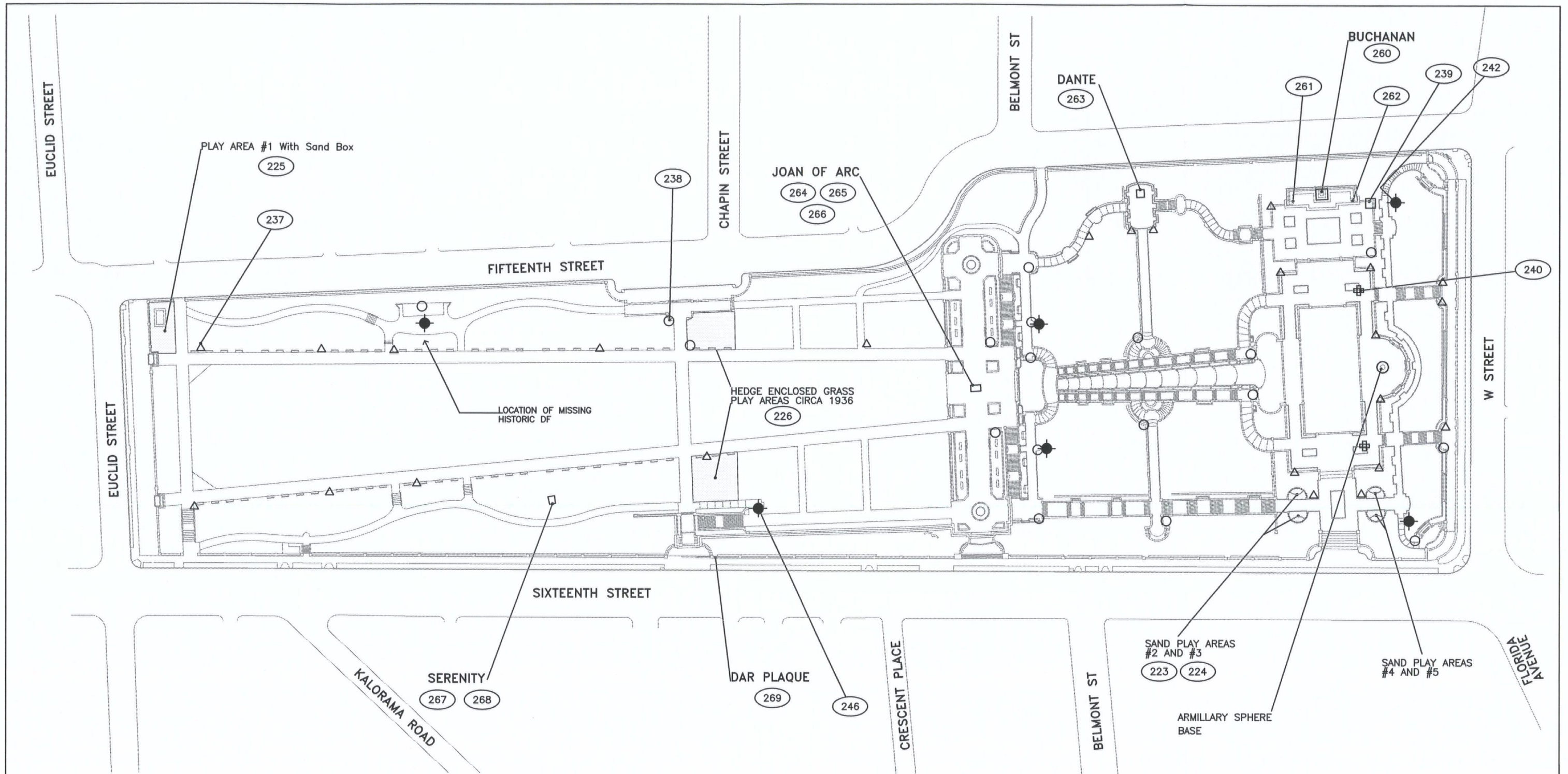
DRAWN BY:
 MACS

DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
 872
 87141

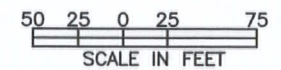
SHEET 44



KEY

- △ TULIP TYPE WITH VERTICAL WOOD SLATS
- METAL TRASH CANS
- PLASTIC TRASH CANS
- ⊞ EXPOSED AGGREGATE TRASH RECEPTACLE

- DRINKING FOUNTAIN
- (XYZ) PHOTOGRAPHIC FIGURES



MERIDIAN HILL PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

National Park Service - National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Prime: Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.
Prepared by: Land Ethics, Inc., Subcontractor, Ann Arbor, MI
Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE:
7-1-99

DRAWN BY:
MACS

EXISTING SITE FURNISHINGS

PLAY AREAS, TRASH RECEPTACLES
DRINKING FOUNTAINS, SCULPTURE
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO.
872
87141
SHEET 45

3.7 Sculpture

a. As Built

There was never an overall plan for the placement of sculpture and plaques in Meridian Hill Park. Instead, sculptures were located on a piece-by-piece basis with varying degrees of prominence in the final park design. The site has five sculptures:

- The Buchanan Memorial, dedicated in 1930, located at the eastern end of the lower plaza, terminating the major cross axis from the lower 16th Street entrance,
- The Dante Statue, dedicated in 1921, located to the east of a small plaza in the center of the east ascent in the hillside gardens,
- The Joan of Arc Statue, dedicated in 1922, located on the main axis of the park on the great terrace, visible from both the upper and lower park,
- The Armillary Sphere, located on the main axis of the park at its southern-most end in the exedra off the lower plaza, installed in 1932, dedicated in 1934,
- Serenity, installed in 1925, located next to the curvilinear path in the enframing border between the mall and 16th Street



Figure 259: This 1938 view of the memorial to President James Buchanan shows signs of water penetration at the wall cap. (RCP-CRF, June 1938).

and a plaque, presented by The Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) memorializing the location of a Washington “meridian stone” on a Western Hemisphere meridian, a proposal never implemented. The plaque is located at the 16th Street entrance. (see plan sheet 45).

Each of the five pieces of sculpture memorialized specific individuals (Dante Alighieri, President James Buchanan, Joan of Arc, Navy Lieutenant Henry Scheutze, and Edith Noyes). The somewhat miscellaneous nature of the sculptures, as a collection, derives from the fact that all were gifts and not pieces specifically commissioned by the park’s designers. Interestingly, three of the sculptures, Joan of Arc, Dante, and Serenity, are copies or replicas of originals located elsewhere. Only the Buchanan memorial and the missing Armillary Sphere were original works.

The sculpture as installed is described in the history section of this CLR and in James Goode’s book, *The Outdoor Sculptures of Washington, D.C.*



Figure 260: The seated figure of President James Buchanan measures nearly eight feet in height, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

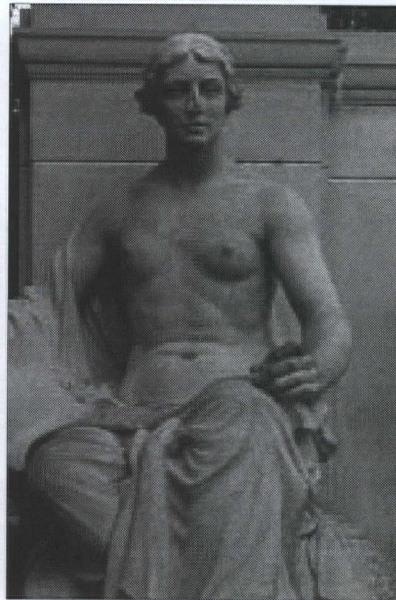


Figure 261: The seven foot figure of Law is part of the Buchanan Memorial, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

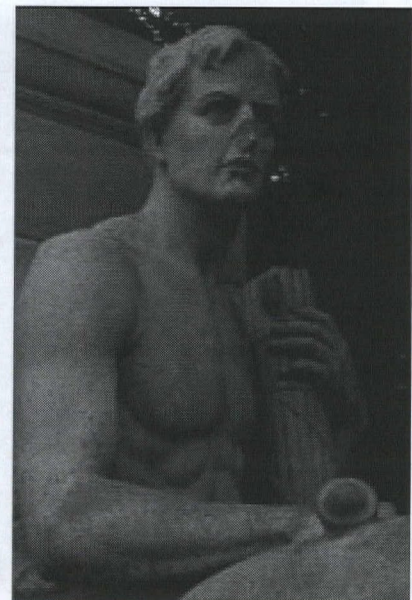


Figure 262: The seven foot figure of Diplomacy is part of the Buchanan Memorial, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

b. Existing Conditions

Buchanan Memorial

The statues of the Buchanan memorial are generally in very good condition with only minor surface damage. Parts of the granite surround of the memorial have settled, opening up some of the panel joints and leaving the steps uneven. There is evidence where the memorial has been defaced by graffiti in several places and it has been removed. Both of the statues flanking President Buchanan, Law and Diplomacy, have minor damage. Law, on the left side facing the memorial, is missing its right thumb (see figure 261). Diplomacy, on the right side, is missing its nose and has badly damaged feet (see figure 262). The Buchanan Memorial exhibits a high degree of integrity due to its good condition, location, and setting.

Armillary Sphere

During the riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King on April 5, 1968, the sphere was badly vandalized. In 1972, the sphere, along with the winged cherub, was removed from the park by the National Park Service. The cherub and the bronze correction tablet are presently in storage at the MRCE (formerly MARS) in Landover, Maryland. The whereabouts of the large bronze rings of the sphere is unknown. The green granite base for the sphere remains in place on the exedra. Measured drawings and photographs of the sphere are stored in the National Archives, Record Groups 79 and 66.

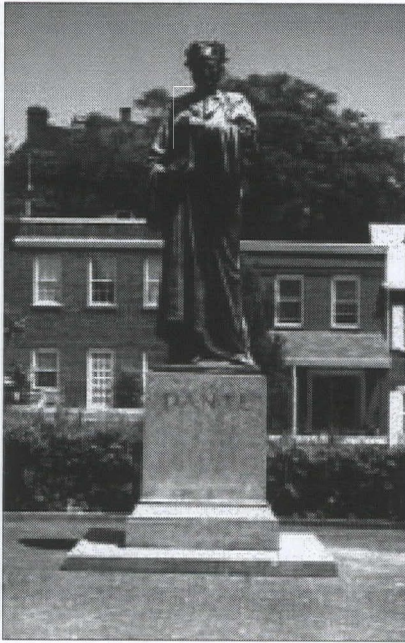


Figure 263: Statue of Dante, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).



Figure 264: Portions of the statue of Joan of Arc have been vandalized, such as the bridle, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

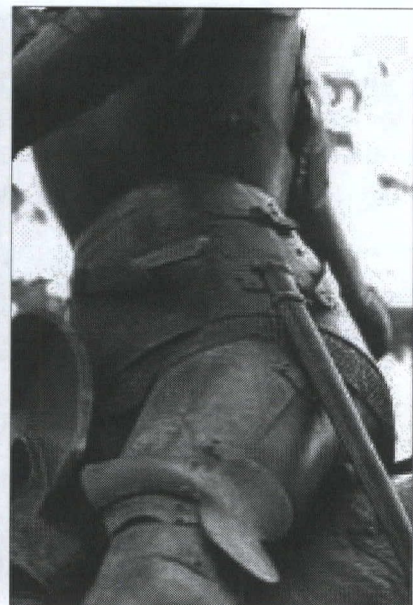


Figure 265: Vandalism to the Joan of Arc statue at the belt where it attaches to the scabbard, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Dante

The Dante Statue exhibits no signs of damage or neglect. The integrity of the statue is preserved, with the condition, location, and design intent intact.

Joan of Arc

Although the Joan of Arc statue is largely intact and in good condition, it does have several broken and missing pieces. The bronze lettering on the base of the sculpture has been vandalized, and many of the letters are bent or missing. The horse is missing a piece of its bridle and has a hairline crack in the left front hoof. The sword from Joan of Arc's right hand is missing, and her belt is broken where it attaches to the scabbard, the bottom part of which is gone.

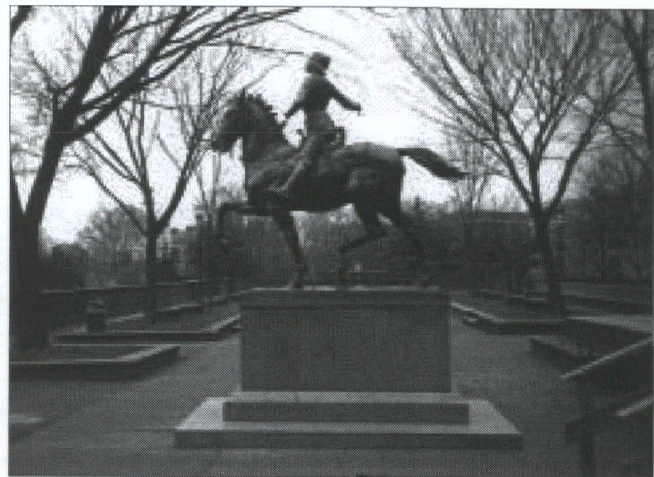


Figure 266: Joan of Arc, facing south towards the Washington Mall, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Although the statue has been repaired in the past, records do not indicate precisely when. A leg support was added to stiffen the horse's left hind leg, which is raised off the ground. Metal rods, not visible, were also driven through the base and into the horse's hooves for support.

While there is damage to both the sculpture and the base, with several key pieces of the figure missing, this type of damage degrades the condition but not the integrity of the statue. The original design intent remains intact. However, the non-original leg support stiffening the left

hind leg does adversely affect the integrity of the statue, compromising the visual quality of the statue.

Serenity

Serenity has been repeatedly vandalized and damaged over the years. The statue's nose and left hand are missing, and there is a hole suggesting the nose may have been previously replaced. Both the left and right big toes are missing, and there are several large cracks in the base of the statue on both the left and right sides. The statue has also been repeatedly defaced with graffiti.

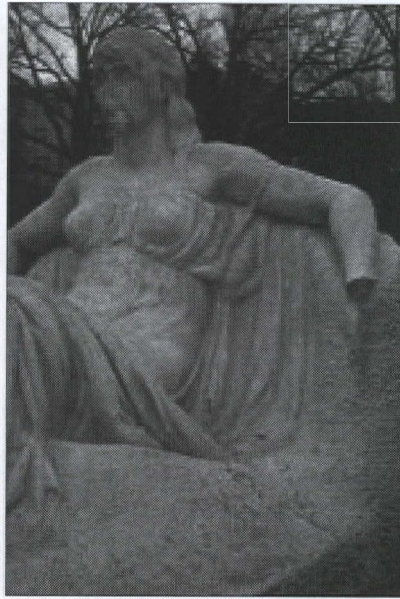


Figure 267: The Serenity statue is in poor condition from vandalism. The nose and left hand are missing. 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

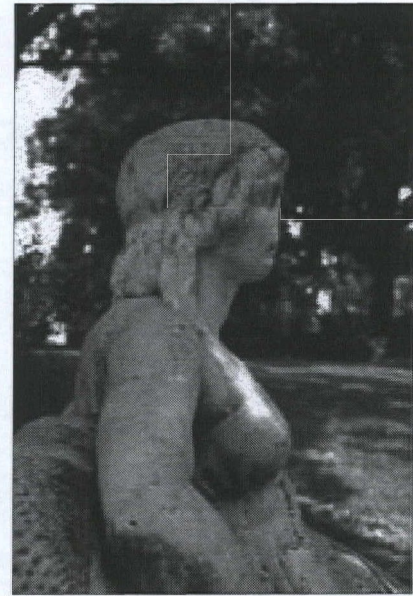


Figure 268: Additional detail of damage inflicted by vandals on the statue of Serenity, 1996 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

Although the sculpture is badly damaged, with key features missing completely, the integrity of the piece is still intact. It remains in its original location, and has not been inappropriately repaired.

Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) Plaque

The plaque is in excellent condition in its original location with no visible damage.

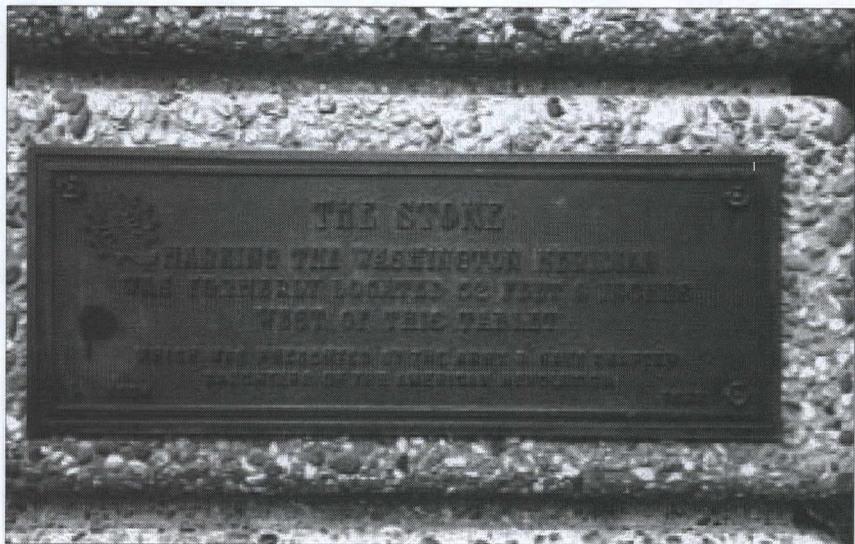


Figure 269: This plaque commemorates the meridian stone originally located in the center of what is now 16th Street. The plaque, donated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, is affixed to the wall to the right side of the 16th Street main entrance to the park and reads "The stone marking the Washington Meridian was formerly located 52 feet 9 inches west of this tablet." The stone so memorialized was actually a privately placed stone on the proposed meridian, 1997 (Land Ethics, Inc.).

4. Bibliography

4.1 General References and Secondary Sources

Aument, Lori R. *Experimentation in Concrete: John J. Earley at Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C. History, Technology, and Characterization of Exposed Aggregate Concrete*. Graduate Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1999.

Between Friends. A publication of Friends of Meridian Hill, Inc., August-September 1990.

Brown, Glenn, ed. *European and Japanese Gardens*. Philadelphia: Henry T. Coates and Co., 1902, as cited in Dolan, Thomas W. "Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D. C." Graduate Thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, 1983.

Columbia Historical Society Records, Washington, D. C., Volumes 33-34. Washington, D. C.: Press of W. F. Roberts Co., Inc., 1932.

Cron, Frederick W. *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful*. Fort Collins: Centennial Publications, 1977

Cultural Resources Files, Rock Creek Park, National Park Service, Washington, D.C..

Dirr, Michael A. *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Company, 1975.

Dolan, Thomas W. *Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C.* Graduate Thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, May 1983.

Fact Sheet: Historical Background and Points of Interest, Meridian Hill Park. National Park Service, Rock Creek Park, 3545 Williamsburg Lane, N. W., Washington, D.C., No date. Photocopy.

Friends of Meridian Hill. Completing the Sculptural Plan for the Park. Draft, May 22, 1991.

Friends of Meridian Hill. Meridian Hill Timeline, 1993.

Fulton, Jean. *A Chronology of the Development of Meridian Hill Park*. Section of thesis titled *Meridian Hill Park*. 1 May 1991.

Goode, James M. *The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C.: A Comprehensive Historical Guide*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974.

Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports. National Park Service, 1998.

Keller, J. Timothy, and Genevieve P. Keller. 1987. *National Register Bulletin 18: "How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes."* Washington, D.C.: USDI, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division.

Kohler, Sue A. *The Commission of Fine Arts, A Brief History 1910-1995.* Washington, D.C., The Commission of Fine Arts, USGPO.

Moore, Charles, ed. *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia.* Washington, D.C., GPO, 1902.

National Encyclopedia of American Biography, Biography of Horace Whittier Peaslee. New York: James T. White & Company. American Institute of Architects Library and Archives, Washington, D. C.

Newton, Norman T. *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Rosenberg, Fromy. *Exposed Aggregate: How to Select and Use It.*

Standards for Preservation, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Prepared by the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance, 1992.

Strach, Steven, Cultural Resources Park Ranger, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS. A Guide to Sources on MHP at National Archives. (RCP-CRF). 1994.

Thacker, Christopher. *The History of Gardens.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1979.

Washington Renaissance: Architecture and Landscape Architecture of Meridian Hill. Meridian House International, Washington, D.C., 1989.

Washington Renaissance: Architecture and Landscape Architecture of Meridian Hill, Exhibition Checklist. Meridian House International, Washington, D.C., 1989.

4.2 Plans/Drawings

(from the National Archives)

Area Transferred from D. C. on 16th Street Between Chapin and Euclid Streets, 1919. Record Group 41 - 49.

Balustrade Details - North Entrance, December 11, 1916. Record Group 41.1 - 2.

Changes in Wall, September 27, 1921. Record Group 41.3 - 1.

- Changes in Wall, Euclid Street and 15th Street, September 1919. Record Group 41.3 - 2.
- Complete Planting Plans. Record Group 41.2 - 6 - 23.
- Concert Stage - Temporary, June 5, 1941. Record Group 41 - 125.
- Concrete Bench, Electrical Fixtures, Etc., October 28, 1935. Record Group 41.6 - 11.
- Contours and Elevation - Upper End, 1914. Record Group 41 - 14.
- Correct Boundary at 30 Scale, 1915. Record Group 41 - 13.
- Design of Walls, July 17, 1915. Record Group 41.3 - 72.
- Detail of Arch - North Entrance, 1916. Record Group 41.3 - 44.
- Detail of Bench with/without Back, February 2, 1936. Record Group 41.6 - 16 - 17.
- Details of Benches, Sidewalk Lights, Etc., January 1, 1936. Record Group 41.6 - 15.
- Details of Drinking Fountain, January 4, 1936. Record Group 41.6 - 18.
- Details of Exedra Pool and Copings, August 6, 1928. Record Group 41.3 - 142.
- Details of Fountains at End of Great Terrace, January 1, 1936. Record Group 41.6 - 14.
- Development Plan, April, 1914. Record Group 41 - 64.
- Development Plan, February 20, 1918. Record Group 41 - 65.
- Drinking Fountain and Oil Jars, October 28, 1935. Record Group 41.6 - 10.
- East Steps to Great Terrace, Plan, Elevation and Details, August 20, 1930. Record Group 41.4-2.
- Elevation and Section of Meridian Hill Park, February 1918. Record Group 41 - 5.
- Elevation and Sections-Lower Wall on 16th Street, November 9, 1914. Record Group 41.3-16.
- Elevation and Section-Lower Wall on 16th Street, November 9, 1914. Record Group 41.3-17-25.
- Elevation and Sections - North Entrance on 16th Street, 1915. Record Group 41.3 - 47 - 48.
- Elevation of Lower Entrance on 16th Street, 1918. Record Group 41.3 - 39.

- Field Measurements, August 1931. Record Group 41.5 - 13.
- General Plan, November, 1918. Record Group 41 - 59.
- General Plan, October 28, 1935. Record Group 41.6 - 1.
- General Plan Showing Planting, Drinking Fountains, Seats, Etc., near 1932. Record Group 41 - 121.
- General Plan of Lower Gardens and Approaches, August 6, 1928. Record Group 41.3 - 140.
- Grading Plan - 15th Street between Chapin and Belmont Streets, October, 1928. Record Group 41 - 89.
- Grading Plan for Area Below Grand Terrace, September 19, 1928. Record Group 41 - 85.
- Grand Terrace - Existing Conditions, September, 1945. Record Group 41.1 - 96.
- Great Terrace, Plan and Sections, August 9, 1933. Record Group 41.3 - 197.
- Jointing Plan Adjoining Buchanan Memorial, April 29, 1929. Record Group 41 - 96.
- Lamps for Terrace Vestibule Owl Lamps, June, 1933. Record Group 41 - 114.
- Lighting Fixture for 16th Street Niche, June 1933. Record Group 41 - 115.
- Lighting Plan, National Archives, RG 79, File 41.6-74.
- Meridian Hill Park - Revised Plan, Lower Garden and Hillside Ascent, 1918. Record Group 41-3.
- Meridian Hill Park - Contours Map, 1917. Record Group 41 - 11.
- Meridian Hill Park - South of Chapin Street, December 1919. Record Group 41 - 47.
- Meridian Hill Park - Summer Program Sign, March 26, 1964. Record Group 41.2 - 26.
- Outline of Entire Park, October 19, 1927. Record Group 41 - 98.
- Plan for Play Area, April 11, 1925. Record Group 41 - 76.
- Plan of Meridian Hill Park, 1917. Record Group 41 - 57.
- Plan of Meridian Hill Park, July 1920. Record Group 41 - 6.
- Plan of North/South End of Cascade, September 11, 1931. Record Group 41.5 - 2 - 3.

- Plans of Lower Entrance on 16th Street, February 28, 1918. Record Group 41.3 - 37.
- Plant Soil Qualities - Estimate Areas Adjacent to Cascades, March 2, 1933. Record Group 41.5-62.
- Planting Design for Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D. C., by Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert, Landscape Architects, October 29, 1920.
- Planting for Serenity Statue, October 21, 1925. Record Group 41.2 - 2 - 10.
- Preliminary Sketch Plan, May 9, 1915. Record Group 41 - 12.
- Preliminary Sketch of Cascades, 1919. Record Group 41 - 68.
- Preliminary Sketches of Cross Walls with Ramps by Peaslee, 1917. Record Group 41.3 - 106-110.
- Progress Chart for 15th and 16th Streets, January 1929. Record Group 41- 97.
- Progress of Development, 1932. Record Group 41 - 111.
- Restoration of Paved Area on Grand Terrace, September 1945. Record Group 41.1 - 97.
- Seat Details, November 25, 1931. Record Group 41.5 - 26.
- Seats Along Great Terrace, June 1933. Record Group 41 - 116.
- Six Drinking Fountains, September 1932. Record Group 41 - 112.
- Six Plats of Florida Avenue Boundary of Park, September 18, 1867. Record Group 41 - 124.
- Sketch Showing Cascade Motif, 1915. Record Group 41 - 55.
- Survey and Contours, 1917. Record Group 41 - 10.
- Survey to Mark West Line of 15th Street N. W., North of Florida Avenue, June 2, 1925. Record Group 41 - 79.
- Various Details, 1915 - 1917. Record Group 41.1 - 50 - 63.
- Various Details, 1918. Record Group 41.1 - 33 - 49.
- 16th Street Niche - General Drawing, 1936. Record Group 41.6 - 62.

4.3 Aerial Photographs

(from the National Archives)

Can 1A-466, Roll 401, Exposure 44, 19 May 1940, 1:12,000.

Can A2108, W-16Pl-M-1-16PS, Exposure 55, 14 January 1946, 1:15,000.

Can C1126, RS, Exposure 9, 28 July 1952, 1:20,000.

4.4 Memos and Letters

Acting Chief, Design Services Division, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, (memo), 30 December 1988. RCP-CRF.

Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, to Regional Director, NCR, NPS, (memo), 1 April 1981. RCP-CRF.

Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, to Regional Director, NCR, NPS, (memo), 27 November 1981. RCP-CRF.

Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, to Regional Director, NCR, NPS, (memo) February 9, 1982. RCP-CRF.

Associate Regional Director, Land Use Coordination, NCR, NPS, U. S. Department of Interior, to Acting Chief, Design Services, NCR, NPS, (memo), 1 February 1989. RCP-CRF.

Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Regional Director, NCR, NPS, (memo), 23 October 1992. RCP-CRF.

Biderman, Ben, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, to Terry Carlstrom, NCR, NPS, (fax), 2 August 1990. RCP-CRF

Brown, Michael, Assistant Superintendent, ROCR, NCR, NPS, to File, (memo), 12 February 1993. RCP-CRF.

Burnap, George, Landscape Architect, to the Commission of Fine Arts, 1 November 1918. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Cammerer, Arno B., Director, National Park Service, to Gilmore D. Clarke, Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, 7 December 1939. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Carlstrom, Terry, Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, 7 August 1991. RCP-CRF.

Chief, Division of Safety, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, National Capital Region, (memo), 29 March 1991. Meridian Hill Pump House Survey. RCP-CRF.

Clarke, Gilmore D., Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, to Hon. A. B. Cammerer, Director, National Park Service, 25 November 1939. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Clarke, Gilmore D., Commission of Fine Arts. Letter to Irving C. Root, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, NPS, May 22, 1944. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Colbert, Eugene J., Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, NCR, NPS, to Chief, U.S. Park Police, (memo), 11 September 1978. RCP-CRF

Colyer, George S., Chair of the Restoration Planning Committee, Friends of Meridian Hill, to Rolland Swain, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, 5 March 1991. RCP-CRF.

Commission of Fine Arts, to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, (memo), 28 February 1922. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Delano, Frederic A., Chairman, National Capital Parks and Planning Commission to Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, 25 March 1941. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Director of the National Park Service, to the Legislative Council of the House of Representatives, 2 April 1970. RCP-CRF

Eckert, W. J., Columbia University, to C. Paul Jannewein, April 15, 1931. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Finley, David E., Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, to Mr. Conrad L. Wirth, Director, National Park Service, (memo), 12 May 1954. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Finnan, C. Marshall, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, NPS, to Roger Dunn, 1464 Clifton Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 17 March 1937. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Fish, Jack [sic], Regional Director, NCR, NPS, to Robert R. Garvey, Jr., Executive Director, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 26 August 1980. RCP-CRF.

Flota, Cheryl, Light'n Up, 2317 15th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., to Steven W. Coleman, President, Friends of Meridian Hill, 10 January 1992. RCP-CRF.

Gartside, Frank T., Assistant Superintendent, National Capital Parks, NPS, to Mr. David P. Braun, no date. RCP-CRF.

Gartside, F. T., Chief of Park Division, to the Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, (memo), 7 August 1931. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Giannetti, Robert, Giannetti's Studio, to Mr. Conley, National Capital Parks-East, NPS, 29 January 1973. RCP-CRF.

Gilbert, Cass, Commission of Fine Arts, to Col. William W. Harts, Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts, 21 January 1915. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Gillette, D. H., Chief, Engineering Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, to Horace W. Peaslee, Architect, 28 July 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Grant, U. S. III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, to Alice Hutchins Drake, 1410 Girard Street, Washington, D. C., 10 June 1932. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Grant, U. S. III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, to Charles Moore, Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, 23 March 1927. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Grant, U. S. III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, to Horace W. Peaslee, Architect, 8 December 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Grant, U. S. III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, to Ferruccio Vitale, Landscape Architect, 12 November 1929. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Greenleaf, James, Commission of Fine Arts, to Colonel C. S. Ridley, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, 17 February 1919. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Greenleaf, James, Commission of Fine Arts, to H. P. Caemmerer, Assistant to the Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts, 27 July 1920. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Hackett, Kevin J., Eastern Coordinator, John Muir Institute, to James Redmond, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, 26, June 1981. RCP-CRF.

Hanson, A. H., Landscape Architect, to Chief of Park Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, (memo) 3 May 1933. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Harts, William W., Officer in Charge, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, to the Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, 25 September 1914. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Hebblethwaite, Frank, Park Ranger, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, to James Spears, 4327 N. Kenmore Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, 2 September 1992. RCP-CRF.

Huber, Richard G., Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, NPS, to Regional Director, NCR, NPS, (memo), 1 April 1981. RCP-CRF.

Hunsicker, Henry N., Symphonic Fountains, Inc, to Mr. Burnice Kearney, Superintendent, National Capital Parks-East, NCR, NPS, 27 May 1977. RCP-CRF.

Hutchison, Ira J., Superintendent, National Capital Parks-East, NPS. Status Report on Conditions at Meridian Hill Park, to Director, National Capital Parks, NPS, 9 May 1975. RCP-CRF.

Hutchison, Ira J., Superintendent, National Capital Parks-East, NPS, to Director, National Capital Parks, NPS, (memo), 10 May 1976.

Jennewein, C. Paul, to Charles Moore, Commission of Fine Arts, 20 January 1931. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Jennewein, C. Paul, to Charles Moore, Commission of Fine Arts, 29 December 1933. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Jett, T. Sutton, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, (press release) 2 May 1962. RCP-CRF.

Kirkpatrick, Malcolm, Landscape Architect, to Horace Peaslee, Architect, (memo), 31 July 1936. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Landscape Architect, Design Services Division, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, (memo), 17 November 1980. RCP-CRF.

Landscape Architect, Design Services Division, NCR, NPS, to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, (memo), February 1982. RCP-CRF.

Levy, Benjamin, Acting Chief Historian, to Robert Stanton, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, 24 August 1994: Informing NPS of designation of MHP as a National Historic Landmark.

Leyh, George F., Executive Vice President, American Concrete Institute, to Manus J. Fish, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, 29 November 1984. RCP-CRF.

Longworth, J. J., Civil Engineer, Design Services, NCR, NPS, to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, 19 February 1981. RCP-CRF.

McConnell, Thomas M., Chief, Contracting Officer, Division of Contracting, NCR, NPS, to Garcia Contractors, Inc., Silver Spring, MD, (notice of award), 21 January 1992. RCP-CRF.

McGrath, Dorn C. Jr., Chairman, Committee of 100 on the Federal City, to Robert Stanton, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, 13 February 1992. RCP-CRF.

McGrath, Dorn C. Jr., Chairman, Committee of 100 on the Federal City, to Robert Stanton, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, 20 June 1994. RCP-CRF.

McMahon, Michael, Landscape Architect, Design Services, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, (memo), 10 September 1993. Conceptual Drawing for Park Police Substation and Visitor Center at Meridian Hill Park. RCP-CRF.

Mehaffey, J. C., Chief of Engineering Division, to Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, (memo), 7 November 1929. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Merriam, John C., President, Carnegie Institution of Washington. Letter to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, November 5, 1929. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to Gilmore D. Clarke, Landscape Architect, 19 September 1932. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to U.S. Grant III, Director, Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 28 May 1928. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to U.S. Grant III, Director, Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 20 November 1929. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to U.S. Grant III, Director, Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 21 October 1930. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to U.S. Grant III, Director, Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 19 December 1930. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, 29 April 1933. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to C. Paul Jennewein, 8 July 1930. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to C. Paul Jennewein, 14 February 1931. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to C. Paul Jennewein, 23 January 1933. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to C. Paul Jennewein, 19 December 1933. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to Hon. Henry W. Keyes, U. S. Senate, 5 May 1932. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to Horace W. Peaslee, 12 May 1932. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to Arno B. Cammerer, Director, National Parks, Buildings and Reservations, Interior Department, 16 October 1933. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to Hon. A.B. Cammerer, Director, Nation Park Service, [sic] Interior Department, 18 December 1934. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to Horace W. Peaslee, 9 April 1952. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Charles, Commission of Fine Arts, to Col. C. O. Sherrill, Officer in Charge, Office of Public Buildings and Public Grounds, 21 December 1922. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Moore, Robert L., State Historic Preservation Officer, Government of the District of Columbia, Department of Housing and Community Enhancement, 6 August 1980. Letter concurring that removal of 17 trees at the linden allee will not adversely effect the characteristics of Meridian Hill Park. RCP-CRF.

Mortensen, Robert H., President, American Society of Landscape Architects, to Mr. Manus J. Fish, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, 31 July 1985. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Landscape Architect, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, NPS (memo), 18 March 1976. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Landscape Architect, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, (memo) 17 November 1980. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Chief, Design Services, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, (memo), 27 July 1993. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Landscape Architect, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, (memo), 10 December 1981. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Landscape Architect, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, (memo), 16 December 1981. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Landscape Architect, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Catha Rambusch, Wave Hill, Bronx, N.Y., 23 September, 1988. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Landscape Architect, Professional Services, NCR, NPS, to Catha Rambusch, Wave Hill, Bronx, N.Y., 15 November 1988. RCP-CRF.

Neal, Darwina, Chief, Design Services, NCR, NPS, to Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, (memo), 27 May 1994. Review of conceptual plans for Park Police Substation and Visitor Center at Meridian Hill Park. RCP-CRF.

Olmsted, Jr., Frederick Law, to U. S. Grant III and Frederick Delano as to sidewalks at Meridian Hill Park, (memo) 4 July 1931. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Payne, I. W., Landscape Architect, to Chief of Engineering Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, (memo) 28 May 1931. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peabody, Malcolm E., Co-Chair and Treasurer, Friends of Meridian Hill, to Mr. Robert Stanton, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, 21 July 1994. RCP-CRF.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Col. C. S. Ridley, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, 20 February 1918. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 1 February 1928. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 17 August 1928. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 22 August 1928. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Charles Moore, Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, 6 April 1929. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Major J. C. Mehaffey, National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, 12 December 1929. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 22 January 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 1 February 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 5 February 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to H. P. Caemmerer, Commission of Fine Arts, 21 February 1930. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 24 February 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 25 March 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 24 April 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 28 April 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Major D. H. Gillette, Chief, Engineering Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 23 June 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Charles Moore, Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, 18 October 1930. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 7 November 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 17 November 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 19 December 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 2 January 1931. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 9 January 1931. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect. Letter to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 13 January, 1931. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 28 September 1932. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Arno B. Cammerer, Director, National Parks, Buildings and Reservations, 10 April 1933. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Major D. H. Gillette, Office of Public Buildings and Parks, 29 June 1933. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, 9 April, 1935. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, 20 October 1935. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts, (memo), 23 December 1935. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Malcolm Kirkpatrick, Landscape Architect, National Capital Parks, 26 May 1936. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to C. Paul Jennewein, 29 July 1936. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Malcolm Kirkpatrick, Landscape Architect, 4 August 1936. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent, National Capital Parks, 10 December 1936. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect, to Commission of Fine Arts, (memo), 9 April 1954. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Peters, C. A., Senior Civil Engineer, to Chief of Engineering Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, (memo), 11 November 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peters, C. A., Senior Civil Engineer, to Chief of Engineering Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, (memo), 24 November 1930. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Peters, C. A., Assistant Chief, Design Section, to Chief, Engineering Division, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 13 May 1931. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Platt, Charles A., Architect, to Charles Moore, Commission of Fine Arts, 12 December 1930. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

President of the United States, William J. Clinton. Remarks at Earth Day Celebration, Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D. C. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 21 April 1994. RCP-CRF.

Rambusch, Catha G., The Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States, Wave Hill, New York, New York, to Darwina L. Neal, Landscape Architect, NCR, NPS, 22 September 1988. RCP-CRF.

Rambusch, Catha G., The Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States, Wave Hill, New York, New York, to Darwina L. Neal, Landscape Architect, NCR, NPS, October 1988. RCP-CRF.

Rambusch, Catha G., 430 East 20th Street, New York, New York, to Darwina L. Neal, Landscape Architect, NCR, NPS, 9 December 1988. RCP-CRF.

Rambusch, Catha G., 430 East 20th Street, New York, New York, to Darwina L. Neal, Landscape Architect, NCR, NPS, 30 December 1988. RCP-CRF.

Ross, Ralph R, Chief, Contracting Division, Contracting Officer, NCR, NPS, National Capital Region, to Fort Meyer Construction Corp, Arlington, VA, 29 September 1976. Notice of Award. RCP-CRF.

Ross, Ralph R, Chief, Contracting Division, Contracting Officer, NCR, NPS, National Capital Region, to County Construction Co., Kensington, MD., 15 June 1978. Notice to Proceed and Contract Time. RCP-CRF.

Ridley, Col. C. S., Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, to Hon. L. Y. Sherman, U. S. Senate, 22 September 1919. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Riggs, Lawrason, Baltimore, MD, to H. P. Caemmerer, Commission of Fine Arts, 19 July 1927. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Sears, Julian, Acting Director, U. S. Geologic Survey, to U. S. Grant III, Director, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, 4 November 1929. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Seferlis, Constantine, Sculptor, to William Shields, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, 18 October 1993. RCP-CRF.

Shields, William, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, to Michael Lawrence, Chairman, Restoration Committee, Friends of Meridian Hill, 3 December 1993. RCP-CRF.

Shields, William, Superintendent, Rock Creek Park, NCR, NPS, to Chief, Design Services, NCR, NPS, (memo), 10 May 1993. RCP-CRF.

Sherrill, Lieut. Col. C. O., Corps of Engineers, to Mrs. W. H. Carter, 2125 Bancroft Place, Washington, D.C., 8 March 1922. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Stanton, Robert, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, to Robert R. Garvey, Jr., Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 5 March 1985. RCP-CRF.

Stanton, Robert, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, to Robert L. Moore, State Historic Preservation Officer, District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, Washington, D.C., 11 March 1982. RCP-CRF.

Stanton, Robert, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, to Ron Wrye, (memo), 26 February 1990. Rock Creek Park Maintenance. RCP-CRF.

Stanton, Robert, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, to Dorn McGrath, Jr., Chairman, Committee of 100 on the Federal City, 30 March 1992. RCP-CRF.

Stanton, Robert, Regional Director, NCR, NPS, to Malcolm E. Peabody, Co-Chair and Treasurer, Friends of Meridian Hill, Inc., Washington, D.C., 4 August 1994. RCP-CRF.

Sturgill, Lowell V., Regional Director, NCR, NPS, to Carol B. Thompson, State Historic Preservation Officer, District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, Washington, D.C., 18 October 1984. RCP-CRF.

Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East, NCR, NPS, to Chief, U. S. Park Police, NPS, (memo), 11 September 1978. RCP-CRF.

Vitale, Ferruccio, Landscape Architect, to Charles Moore, Commission of Fine Arts, 11 November 1930. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Vitale, Ferruccio, Landscape Architect, Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert, to Col. C. S. Ridley, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, 17 August 1920. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Wheeler, R. A., U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, to Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, 22 December 1923. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Whitehouse, L. M., Manager, Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert, to Col. C. S. Ridley, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, 20 March 1919. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Wieland, H. C., Division Engineer, U. S. Department of Transportation, to Richard G. Huber, Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 5 February 1982. RCP-CRF.

Yates, Sidney R., Congress of the United States, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. to Roger Kennedy, Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., (fax), 16 January 1997.

4.5 Contemporary Technical Reports

Biderman, Ben, Denver Service Center, NPS. Summary of Revised Construction Cost Estimates for Meridian Hill Park Incorporating Comments from Design Services, NCR., September 2, 1990. RCP-CRF.

Cobb, Kenneth W., Consulting Engineers, and Youssef & Associates, Consultants for Plumbing Systems, 1966. Report of Survey and Recommendations for Rehabilitation of Electric and Plumbing Systems for Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310. Also available RCP-CRS.

Garcia Construction Company. Public voucher confirming work completed 24 August 1993. RCP-CRF.

Greenhorne & O'Mara. Existing Conditions Survey, Meridian Hill Park, 1997.

Hutchison, Ira J., Superintendent, National Capital Parks - East. Status Report on Conditions At Meridian Hill Park sent to Director, National Capital Parks, 9 May 1975. Photocopy. RCP-CRF.

Light'n Up, Proposed Lighting Scheme for Meridian Hill Park, February 1992. RCP-CRF.

Soils and Foundation Report, Federal Highway Administration, Report #17-81.

Meridian Hill Park. Historical American Building Survey No. 532. National Park Service, 1985.

Symphonic Fountains, Inc. Fountain Specifications, Meridian Hill Park, prepared for National Capital Parks, May 27, 1977. RCP-CRF. This appears only to be a cover letter and outline spec, not a detailed study.

Wong, Terry, Field Report.

4.6 Minutes and Reports

Annual Reports of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of National Capital Parks, References to Meridian Hill Park, 1918-1932. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Chief of Engineers Reports, Meridian Hill Park, 1913-1919. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Chief of Engineers Report, U. S. Army, 1925. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

Commission of Fine Arts, Extract of Minutes of Meetings. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

———. 3 September 1920.

———. 7 January 1921.

———. 24 February 1922.

———. 7 September 1922.

———. 23 April 1924.

———. 6 January 1928.

———. 20 April 1928.

———. 24 May 1928.

———. 28 May 1929.

———. 20 September 1929.

———. 2 February 1930.

———. 16 October 1930.

———. 7 November 1930.

———. 19 March 1931.

———. 15 December 1933.

———. 31 January 1936.

———. 17 November 1939.

Commission of Fine Arts, Minutes of Meetings, 1913-1921. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Commission of Fine Arts Reports, 1913-1919. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Cultural Landscape Report Technical Manual, Discussion Paper, NPS, 1996.

Dean Robinson, National Capital Team, Denver Service Center, NPS, Engineering Report - Task Directive #413, *Meridian Hill Park Retaining Walls*, June 1977.

Engineer Department, U.S. Army, Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310. Record Card - General, 1922-1925.

Engineer Department, U.S. Army, Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310. Record Card - Lodge, 1922-1923.

Engineer Department, U.S. Army, Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310. Record Card - Planting, 1922-1925.

Engineer Department, U.S. Army, Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310. Record Card - Tablet in Entrance, 1922-1923.

Engineer Department, U.S. Army, Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310. Record Card - Walls, 1922-1924.

Exercises Attending the Unveiling of the Monument to the Memory of President James Buchanan - Program, Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C., 26 June 1930. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

H. J. Resolution 305, 72nd Congress, 1st Session, 1932. A joint resolution for the improvement of Meridian Hill Park. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form for Federal Properties, Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1972. (Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.)

National Register of Historic Places-National Historic Landmark Nomination Form, Meridian Hill Park. RCP-CRF. 15 December 1993.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect of Meridian Hill Park, on various experiments and conferences relating to the completion and utilization of the park facilities, dealing largely with recommendations on lighting by Jean Labatut. Memo of 28 September 1939 regarding Water and Light Elements. RG66, Entry 17.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect of Meridian Hill Park, on various experiments and conferences relating to the completion and utilization of the park facilities. Memo of 28 September 1939 regarding Planting and Play. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect of Meridian Hill Park, on various experiments and conferences relating to the completion and utilization of the park facilities. Memo of 24 October 1939 - First discussion with Fine Arts members Mr. Clarke, Ch., Mr. Shepley, Mr. Manship. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Peaslee, Horace W., Architect of Meridian Hill Park, on various experiments and conferences relating to the completion and utilization of the park facilities. Final Memorandum of Fine Arts action on Meridian Hill Park. Committee Report of 16 November and Committee Action of 17 November 1939 regarding Scheme for Sculpture, Planting Problems, and General Problems. National Archives. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Meridian Hill Park. RG 66. Entry 17.

Senate Bill 2943, 66th Congress, 1st Session, 1919. A bill regulating the height of buildings that may be erected on land fronting Meridian Hill Park on the south. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

U.S. War Department. Improvement and Care of Public Grounds, D.C., 1915. Advertisement for proposals for furnishing all materials and labor for construction of retaining wall along west (16th Street) side of Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

U.S. War Department. Improvement and Care of Public Grounds, D.C., 1923. Advertisement for proposals for furnishing all materials and labor for the construction of a shelter and temporary park lodge for Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

U.S. War Department. Improvement and Care of Public Grounds, D.C., 1923. Advertisement for proposals for furnishing all materials and labor for constructing scrubbed concrete walks in Meridian Hill Park. National Archives. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital-Records of the Engineering Division. RG 42. Entry 310.

4.7 Interviews

Coleman, Steven, President, Friends of Meridian Hill. Conversation on May 10, 1996.

Dolinsky, Paul, Chief of HABS, National Capital Region, National Park Service. Phone interview on June 3, 1996.

Neal, Darwina, Chief of Design Services, National Capital Region, National Park Service, 3 June 1996.

Strach, Steven, Cultural Resource Management Specialist, ROCR.

4.8 Newspapers and Magazines

Brown, Ray C. "Seventh Starlight Concert Is Curtailed by Thundershower." *The Washington Post*, 30 July 1941. RCP-CRF.

Cohn, D'Vera. "D.C. Residents Dig In To Reclaim Their Park." *The Washington Post*, 21 October 1991. RCP-CRF.

De Sayn, Elena. "Meridian Hill Series Opened By Spalding: Near Capacity Crowd Hears Violin Virtuoso Under Stars." *The Evening Star*, 27 June 1943. RCP-CRF.

Gaines, Patrice. "Group Vows to Reclaim NW Park." *The Washington Post*, 12 October 1993. RCP-CRF.

Gunn, Glenn D., "Meridian Hill Music-in-Open Pleases Public." *Times-Herald*, 16 August 1942. RCP-CRF.

Haskins, John. "Concerts to Return to Meridian Hill." *The Evening Star*, 5 July 1963. RCP-CRF.

Howard, Melanie. "No Sign of Cupid After 2 Decades." *The Washington Times*, 14 February 1992. RCP-CRF.

Lewis, Roger K. "Italy's Legacy Lives On in D.C. Park." *The Washington Post*, 14 February 1987. RCP-CRF.

Mann, James W. "Meridian Hill Park - Circa 1916." *Concrete International*, October 1979. RCP-CRF.

Millen, William A. "Monument to America's First Bachelor President." *The Sunday Star*, 13 July 1930. RCP-CRF.

Mitchell, Henry. "Meridian Hill: Gentility Captured in Concrete." *The Washington Post*, date unknown. RCP-CRF.

Peaslee, Horace W. "Notes on the Concrete Work of Meridian Hill Park, Washington." *Landscape Quarterly*, October 1940. RCP-CRF.

Raul, Minnie L. "Trees: Comrades of the Road." *The Washington Star*, 13 May 1951. RCP-CRF.

Rosenbaum, Claudia. "Meridian Hill 'Cupid' Safe in Art Warehouse." *The Washington Times*, 15 February 1992. RCP-CRF.

Seigle, Greg. "Making Parks Places of Pride." *The Washington Times*, 21 April 1995. RCP-CRF.

Sullivan, Thomas D. "Meridian Hill Park is Returning to Splendor." *The Washington Times*, 4 August 1995. RCP-CRF.

Sun, Lena H. "Hill With a View, a Tradition." *The Washington Post*, 5 July 1995. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "Washington's Jewel of a Park Losing Its Luster to Vandalism." *The Washington Post*, 24 February 1990. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "Reclaiming Park's Lost Glamor: Friends of Meridian Hill Team With Officials to Clean Up Area." *The Washington Post*, 29 March 1990. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "Friends Help Meridian Hill Park." *The Washington Post*, 4 June 1990. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "Wrested From the Jaws of Crime." *The Washington Post*, 5 August 1993. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "Dick Gregory Is Arrested At NW Park." *The Washington Post*, 13 October 1993. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "President Stops to Smell the Flowers." *The Washington Post*, 22 April 1994. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "Adding Bursts of Color to Meridian Hill Park: Fountains Lighted for the First Time Since World War II." *The Washington Post*, 28 September 1995. RCP-CRF.

Wheeler, Linda. "Mutts Ado About Nothing: Congressional Aid Barks Up Wrong Tree In Fight for a Dog Run at Meridian Hill Park." *The Washington Post*, 1 January 1997. RCP-CRF.

Willrich, Michael. "The Autobiography of Malcolm X Park." *City Paper*, 24-30 November 1989. RCP-CRF.

Willrich, Michael. "D.C. 101: How Malcolm X Park Got Its Name." *City Paper*, 8-14 December 1989. RCP-CRF.

4.8.1 Newspapers and Magazines, by title

"Club May Occupy Henderson Castle." *The Sunday Star*, 1 April 1928. RCP-CRF.

"Congressional Aid Not Forthcoming for Meridian Park." *The Washington Post*, 2 November 1926.

"Falls To Be Added in Meridian Park." *The Evening Star*, 19 April 1931. RCP-CRF.

"Fountains to Play Tomorrow." *The Evening Star*, 31 March 1934. RCP-CRF.

- "Improvements Made at Site of Concerts." *The Washington Post*, 11 June 1944. RCP-CRF.
- "Malcolm X Park: People's Playground." *The Washington Post*, 26 May 1982. RCP-CRF.
- "Meridian Hill Once a Farm Tilled by Nautical Hero." *The Sunday Star*, 28 July 1935. RCP-CRF.
- "Meridian Hill Park Interests Urged." *The Evening Star*, 6 June 1927. RCP-CRF.
- "Meridian Hill Park Lives Again." *The Washington Post*, 16 May 1976. RCP-CRF.
- "Meridian Hill Park Nearing Completion." *The Evening Star*, 10 February 1932. RCP-CRF.
- "Meridian Hill to Have Only Park of Its Kind in America." *The Sunday Star*, 5 August 1928. RCP-CRF.
- "Meridian's Joan Gets New Sword." *The Washington Herald*, 4 January 1933. RCP-CRF.
- "Meridian Park Garden Layout is Approved." *The Washington Post*, 28 May 1927. RCP-CRF.
- "Mozart's 'Marriage of Figaro' in English and Modern Dress Will Open Popular Concert Series at Meridian Hill June 24." *The Washington Post*, 21 May 1944. RCP-CRF.
- "Neighbors Reclaiming Meridian Hill Park." *The Washington Times*, 20 March 1990. RCP-CRF.
- "New Location Ordered for Dante Statue." *The Sunday Star*, 2 September 1923. RCP-CRF.
- "New Park to Get Buchanan Statue." *The Sunday Star*, 3 April 1927. RCP-CRF.
- "Odd Monument: Meridian Hill To Get Armillary Sphere." *The Evening Star*, 12 June 1932. RCP-CRF.
- "Park on the Meridian." *The Washington Star*, 2 October 1966. RCP-CRF.
- "Pictures from the Past." *The Intowner*, July, 1989. RCP-CRF.
- "Proposed Embassy Building on Meridian Hill." *The Washington Post*, 23 March 1924. RCP-CRF.
- "Pylon at Meridian Park." *The Federal Architect*, April, 1938. RCP-CRF.
- "Revive Memories of Meridian Hill." *The Evening Star*, 7 April 1927. RCP-CRF.
- "Starlight Concerts of Chamber Music Planned in Park." *The Evening Star*, 8 June 1941. RCP-CRF.

"Starlight Concerts to Be Held Again in Park." *The Washington Post*, 14 May 1944. RCP-CRF.

"The Glories of Meridian Hill." *The Washington Times*, 19 June 1989. RCP-CRF.

"The Retaking of Meridian Hill." *The Washington Post*, 15 August 1993. RCP-CRF.

"Unveiling of Tablet at Meridian Hill Park." *The Evening Star*, 3 May 1923. RCP-CRF.

"Work is Resumed on Meridian Park." *The Washington Times*, 19 October 1927. RCP-CRF.

"Work Completed on Meridian Hill." *The Evening Star*, 29 September 1936. RCP-CRF.

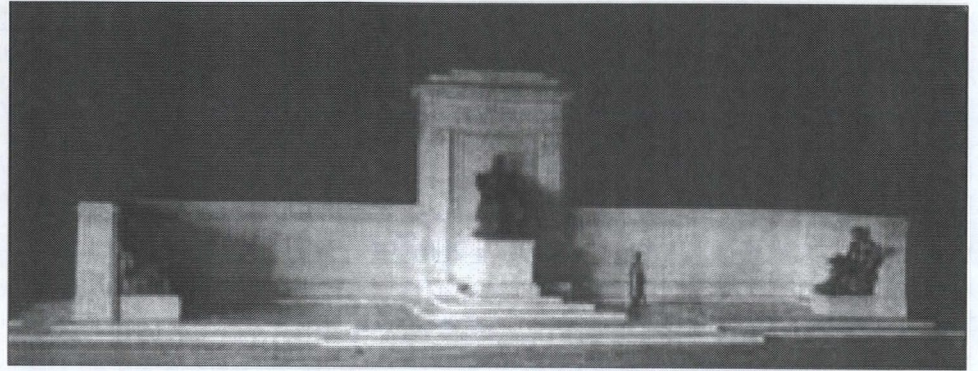
"Work Progressing at Meridian Hill." *The Sunday Star*, 7 November 191_.RCP-CRF.

"16th Street Park Contract Voided." *The Evening Star*, 22 January 1926. RCP-CRF.

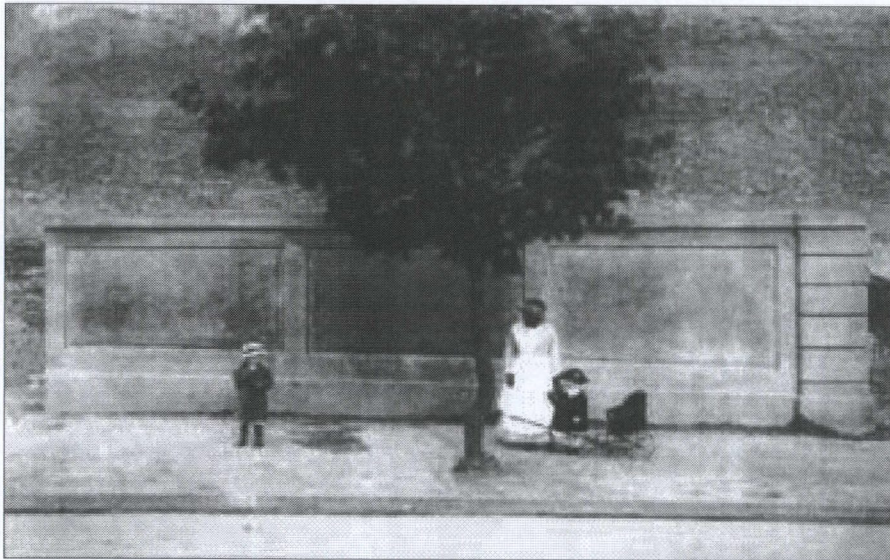
Appendix 1: Historical Photographs

Historical photographs of the site obtained from Rock Creek Park, Cultural Resource File; and the Historic Photograph Collection, NPS-NCR Museum Resources Center; both of the National Park Service, National Capital Region. They will be cited throughout the document as RCP-CRF and MRCE respectively.

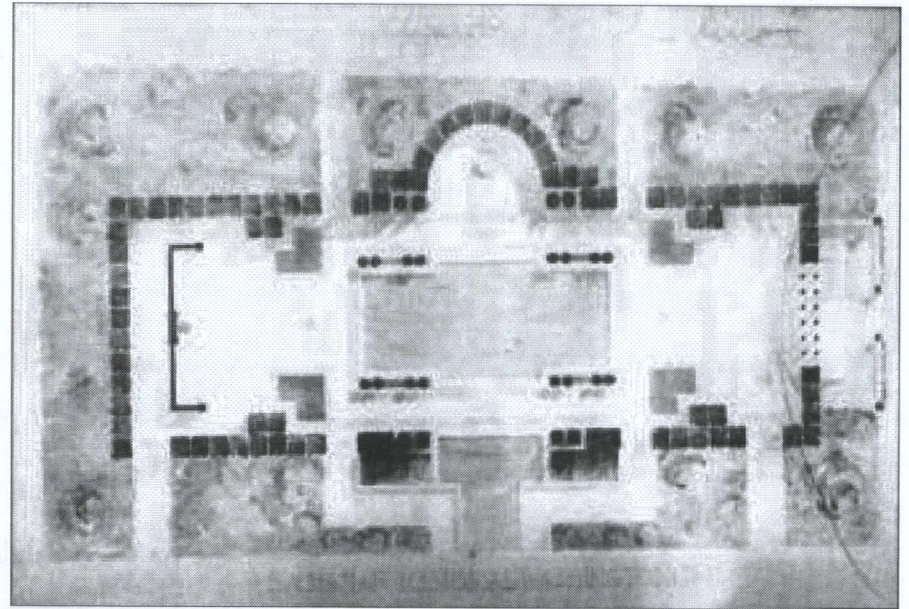
Photos: 1914-1916



Buchanan Memorial model. (National Archives, RG 66-MC, Box 1, folder 4, 1916).

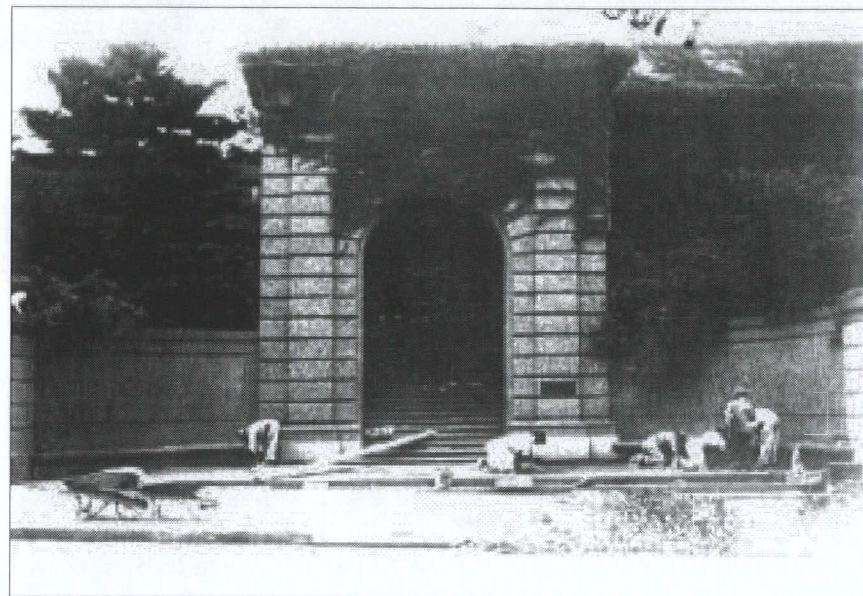


Lower 16th Street retaining wall with note on reverse of photo: "Details of wall for Meridian Hill Park inspected and criticized by members of the commission at their meeting on May 21, 1915." (National Archives, RG 66-DC, Box 2 of 2, Parks folder, May, 1915).



Buchanan Memorial with note on back of photo: "general plan showing main sculpture composition and basin, which were approved up to the pencil line shown, - in other words, exclusive of the entrance treatment, July 14, 1916." (National Archives, RG 66-MC, Box 1, folder 4, 1916).

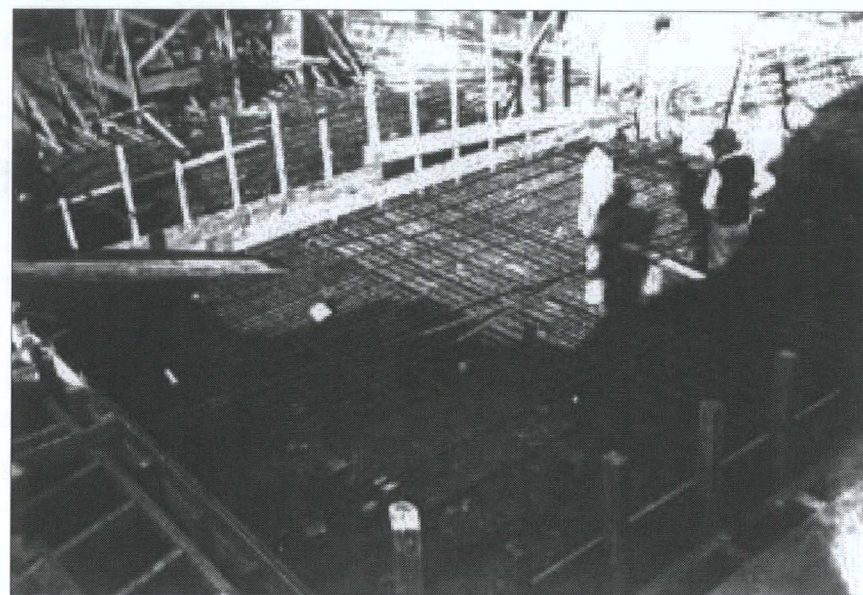
Photos: 1929



Repairs at 16th Street entrance (RCP-CRF, July 2, 1929).



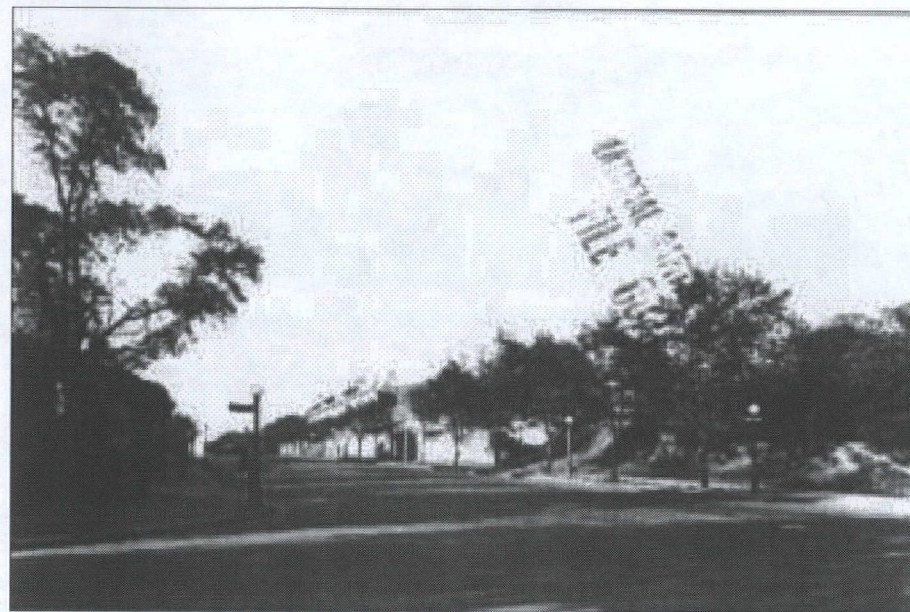
Wall underpinning at 16th Street (RCP-CRF, October 25, 1929).



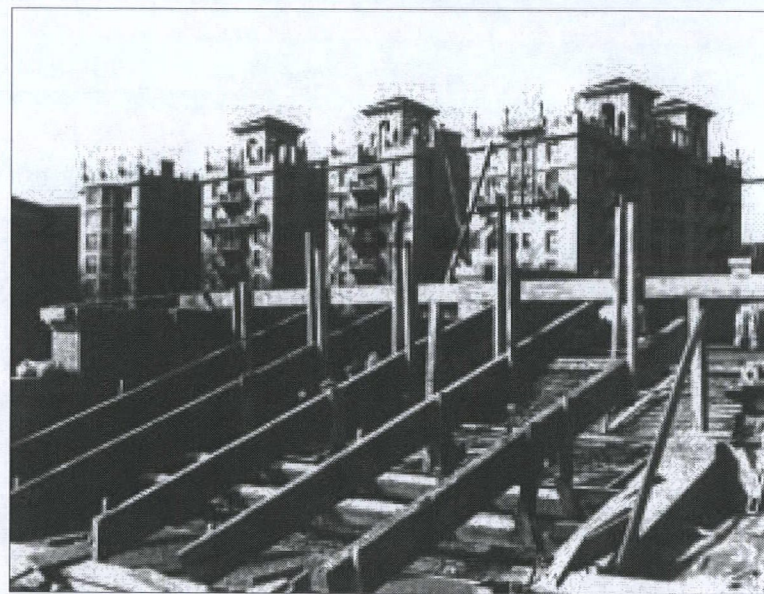
Concrete forms and reinforcement rods (RCP-CRF, November 8, 1929).



Excavation showing earth strata (RCP-CRF, November 8, 1929).



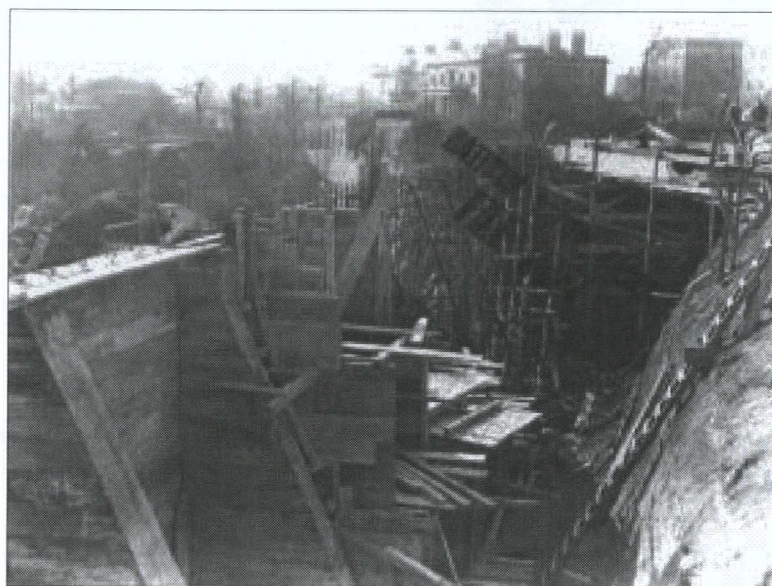
View north on 16th Street prior to development of lower gardens (RCP-CRF).



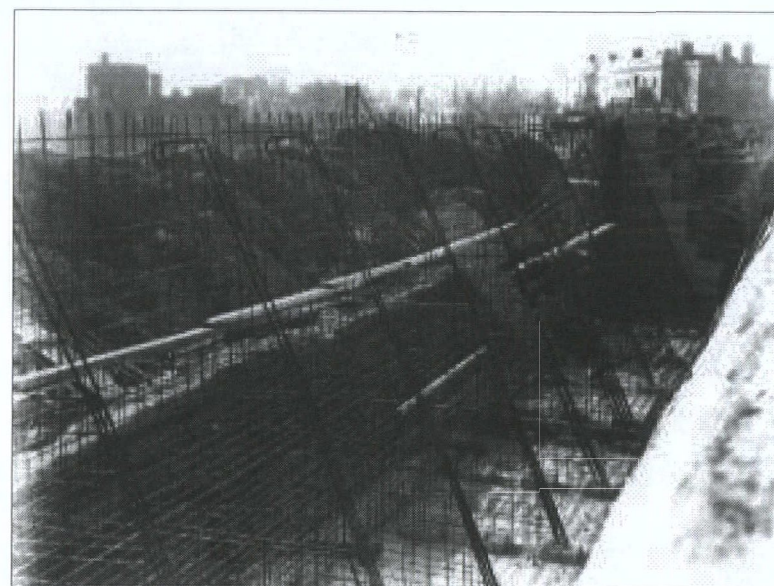
Step construction looking northwest across 16th Street (RCP-CRF, c. 1929-1930).



Concrete mixers, with chutes for placing concrete, along 16th Street wall (RCP-CRF, 1929).

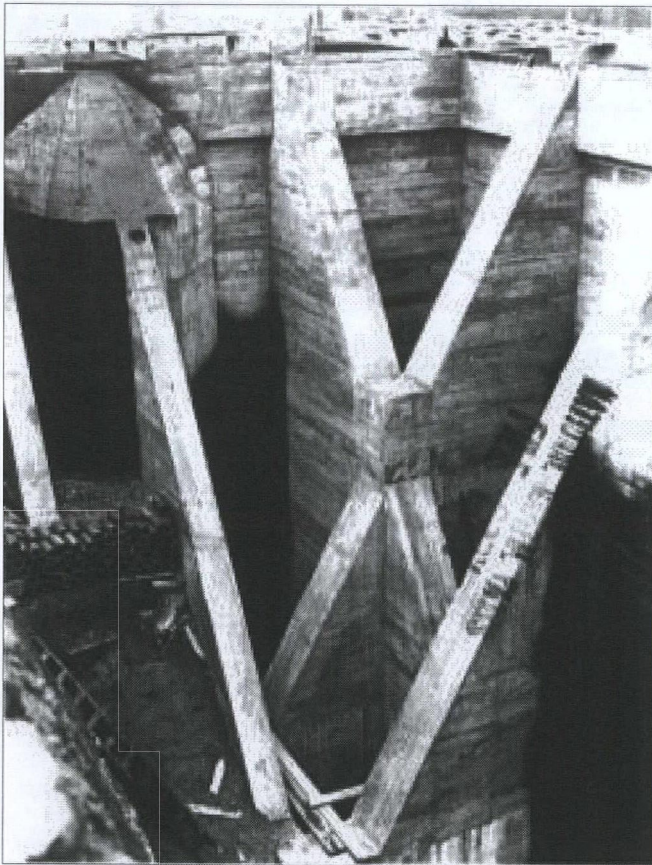


Wall construction (RCP-CRF, 1929).



Wall construction along 16th Street, showing reinforcement (RCP-CRF, 1929).

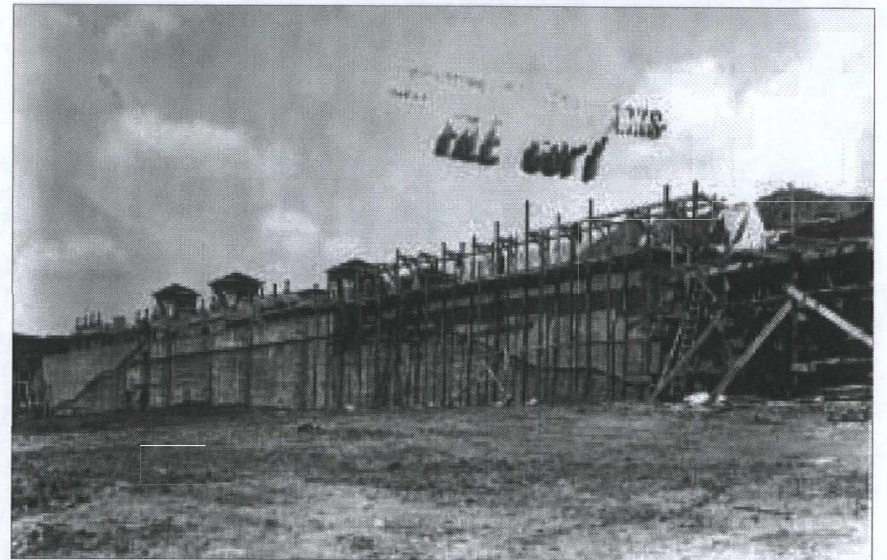
Photos: 1930



Interlaced counterforts at 16th Street corner (RCP-CRF, March 10, 1930).



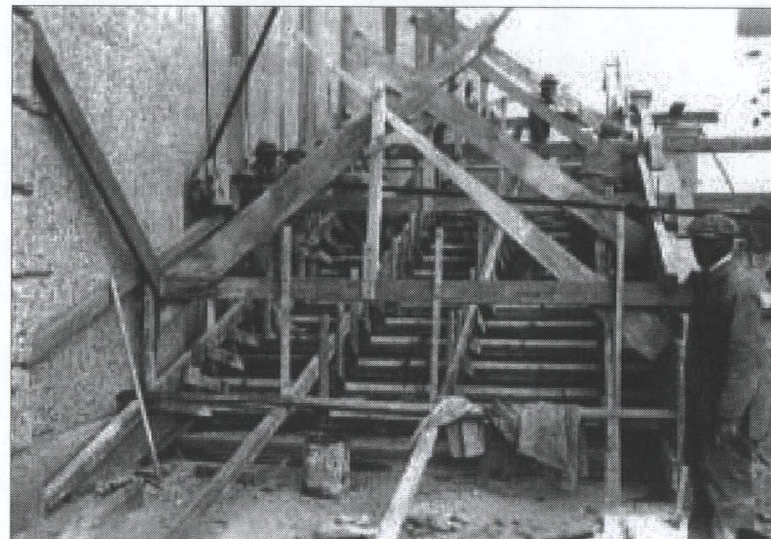
Inside 15th Street end of great terrace (RCP-CRF, March 10, 1930).



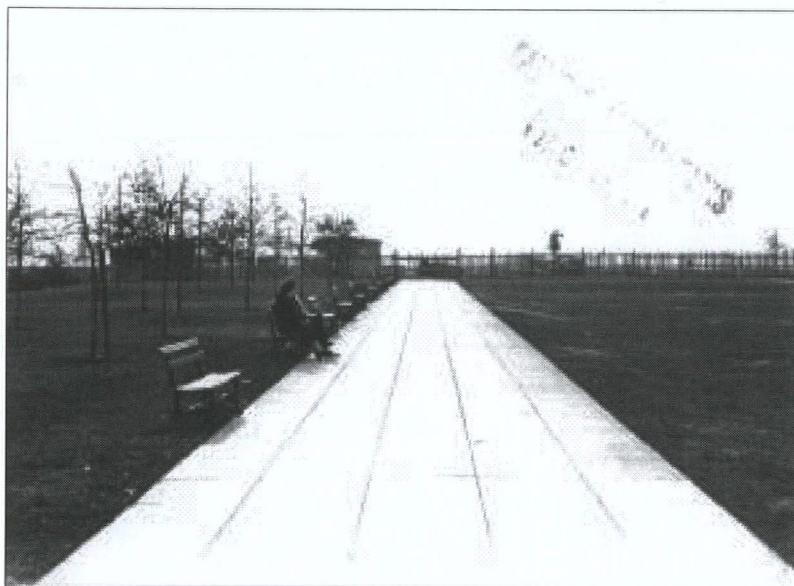
Great wall under construction, looking northwest from lower gardens (RCP-CRF, May 14, 1930).



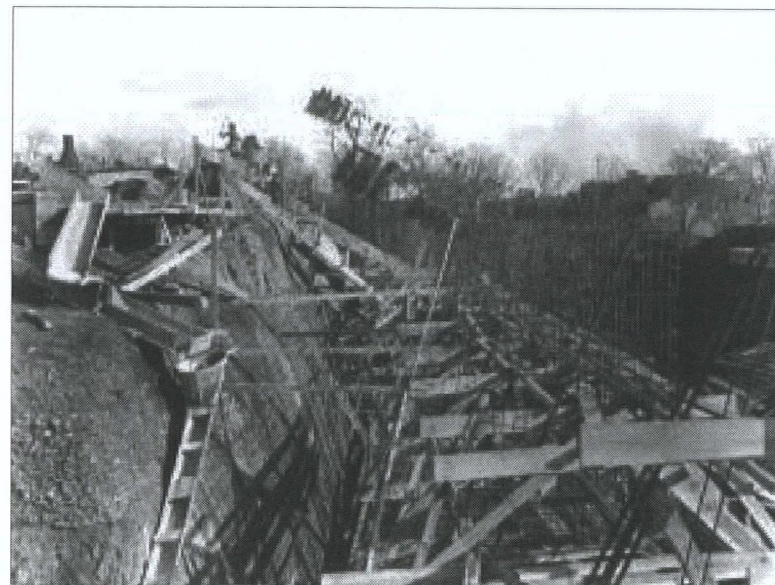
Work along great terrace (RCP-CRF, May 14, 1930).



Construction of stairs from great terrace to lower gardens (RCP-CRF, c. 1930).

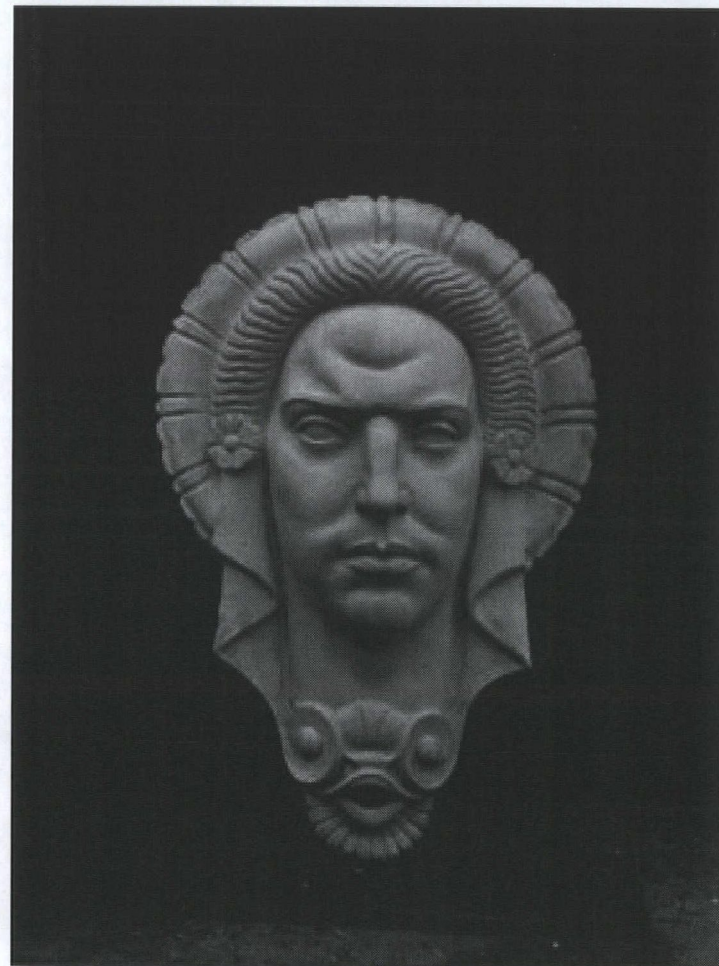


Temporary benches along upper mall, looking south toward great terrace (RCP-CRF, no date).



View of great wall construction, looking southeast from terrace (RCP-CRF, no date).

Photos: 1931



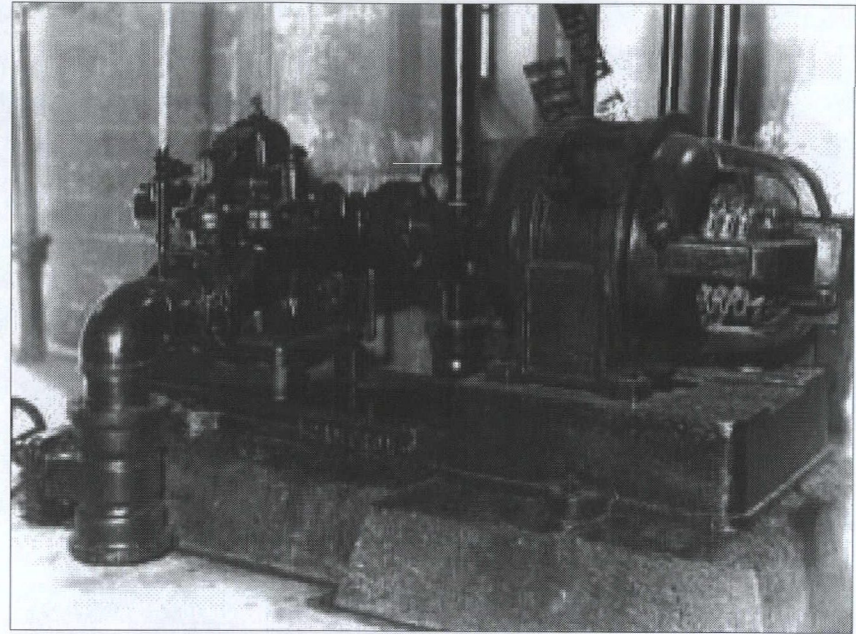
Model of head in main 16th Street entrance (RCP-CRF, August 10, 1931)

Photos: 1932



View across 16th Street showing lower gardens completed and cascades under construction (RCP-CRF, 1932).

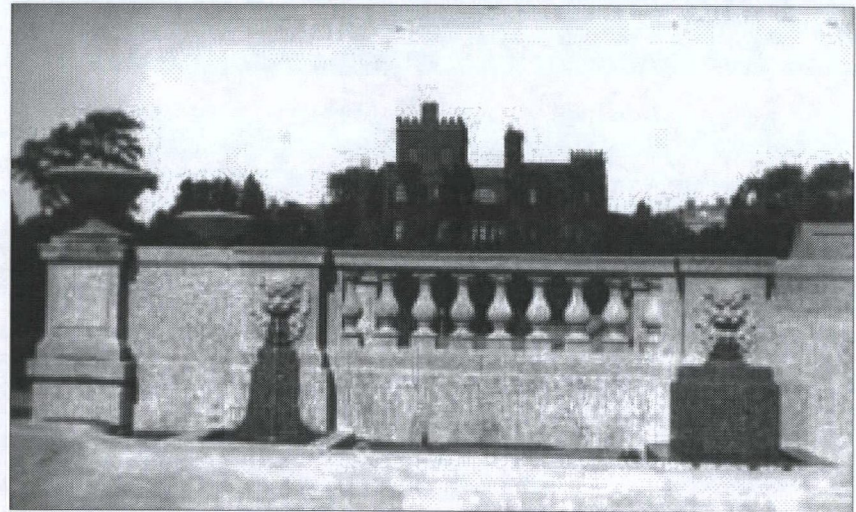
Photos: 1933



Cast iron pump for cascades (RCP-CRF, c. 1933).

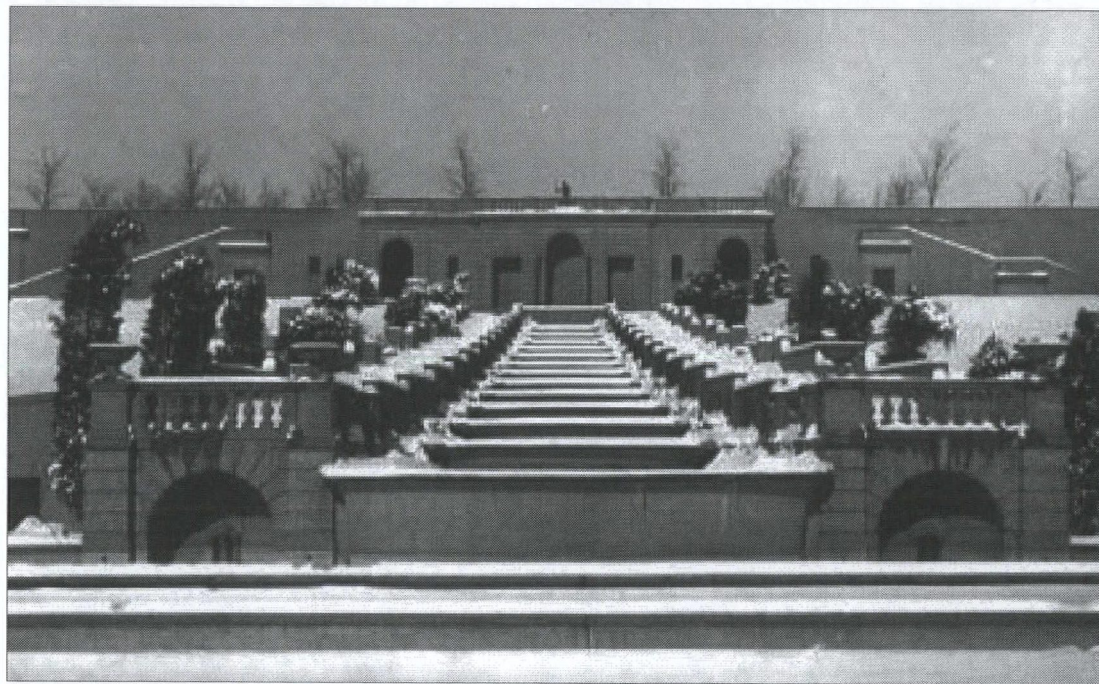


Planting of west hillside gardens (RCP-CRF, July 17, 1933).



Grotesque mask spouts in east face of west wall at lowest cascades basin. Henderson castle visible in background across 16th Street (RCP-CRF, c. 1933).

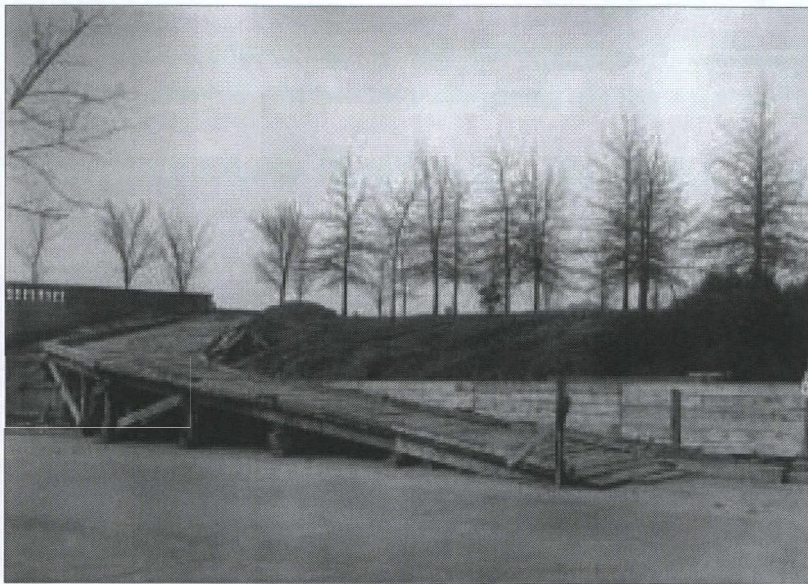
Photos: 1935



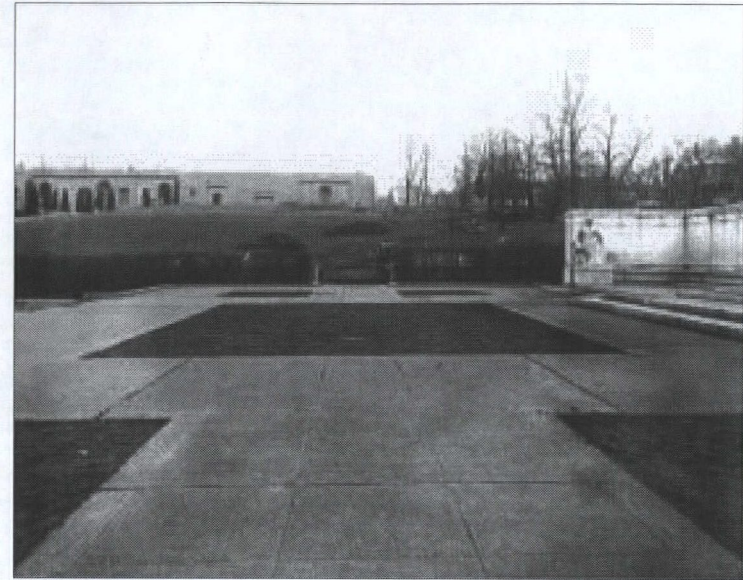
Cascades in the snow (RCP-CRF, c. 1935).

Photos: 1936

No appropriations were made for the park in 1934 and 1935. It appears that none were made in 1933, either. Then in 1936, \$145,000 were appropriated to complete the park. As can be seen in the 1936 photographs, a considerable amount of structural, mechanical, and planting work remained to be done at the beginning of that year. The park was officially opened September 26, 1936.



Access ramp (temporary) to upper park, from 15th Street towards great terrace (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



East ascent after subgrading, looking north from lower plaza towards great wall (RCP-CRF, January 1, 1936).



East ascent during construction, looking south towards Buchanan Memorial (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



Elm trees on great terrace, before being raised in planters. View southwest from Joan of Arc statue. Note the temporary benches along the east mall walk. (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



View southwest from great terrace after subgrading in lower gardens (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



View south along 16th Street before planting (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



16th Street niche before planting, looking south (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



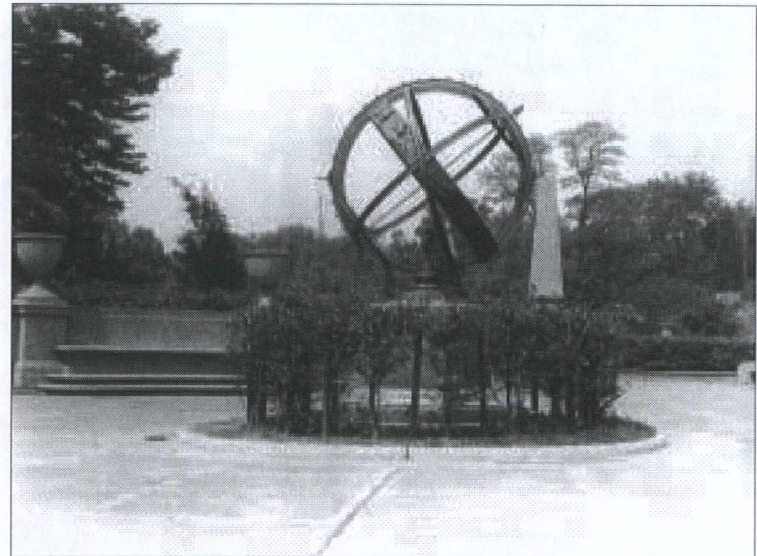
Construction of walkways around Dante statue (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



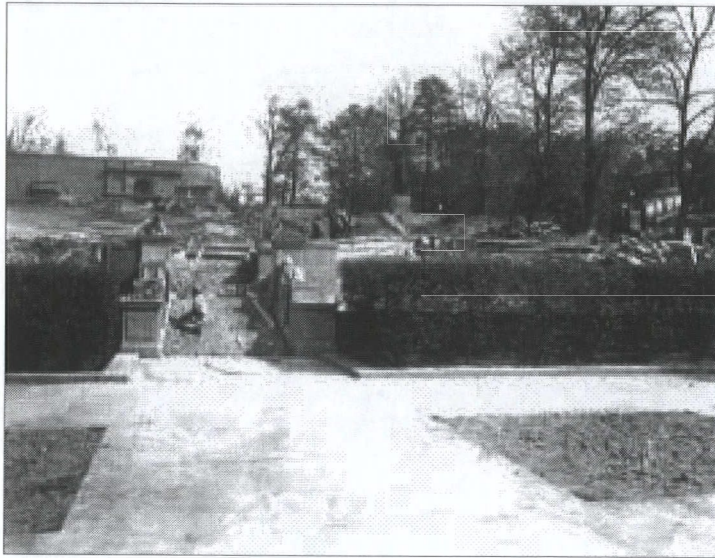
Joan of Arc before terrace and raised planters were built (RCP-CRF, March 16, 1936).



Pipe through trench at great terrace (RCP-CRF, April 21, 1936).



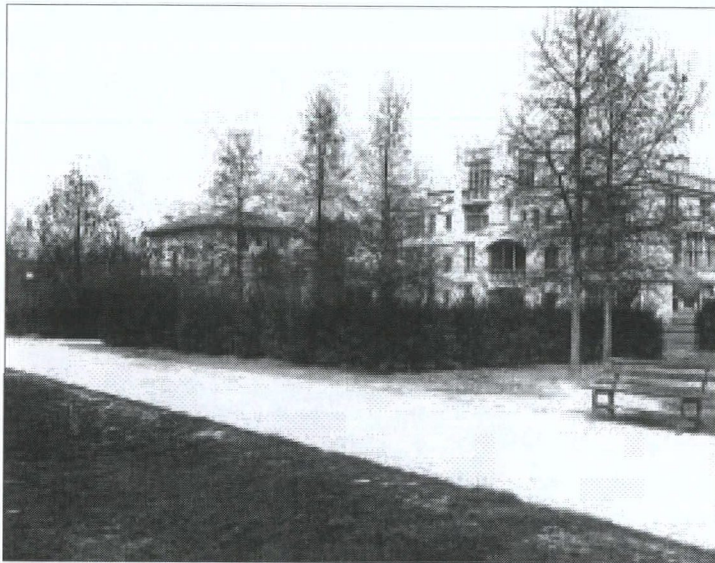
Armillary Sphere (RCP-CRF, May 12, 1936).



East ascent construction, looking north from lower plaza (RCP-CRF, April 28, 1936).



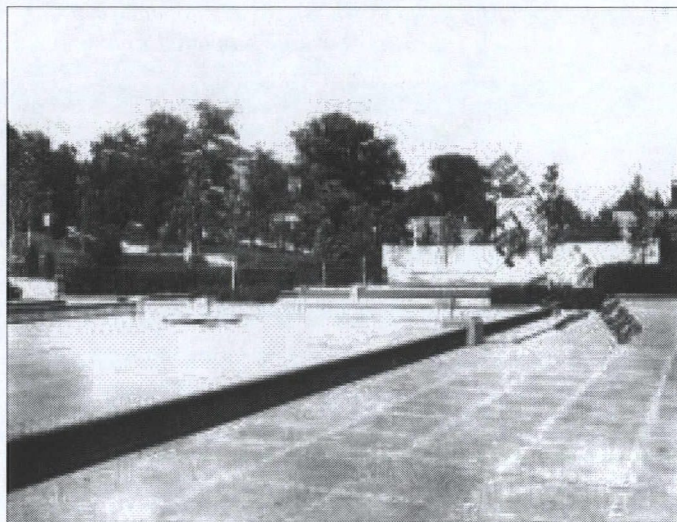
Subgrading in hillside gardens, looking southeast from west end of great terrace (RCP-CRF, April 28, 1936).



New hemlock hedge surrounding play area at 15th-Chapin Street entrance. Note permanent benches not yet in place. (RCP-CRF, April 28, 1936).



East ascent under construction, looking southeast towards Buchanan Memorial. Note construction bridge across ascent (RCP-CRF, April 28, 1936)



Newly planted Sycamores and Hornbeam hedges on lower plaza. Note granite sets at the corner of the reflecting pool. This area was repeatedly shown to be variously planted, however by the opening of the park the granite sets were in place. (RCP-CRF, June 14, 1936)



Planting between walls along 16th street south of great terrace (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



Grading along east ascent/Dante statue, looking southeast from great terrace (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



Fountain formwork on upper terrace (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



16th Street niche during construction (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



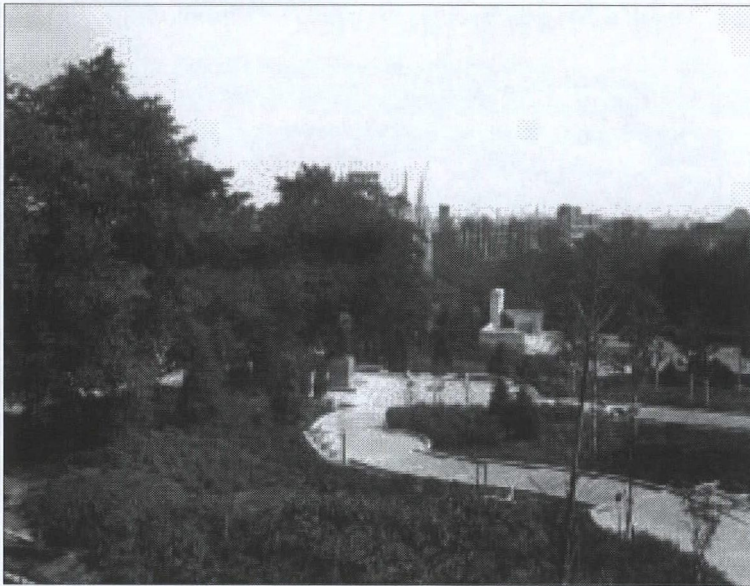
Great terrace fountain under construction. (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



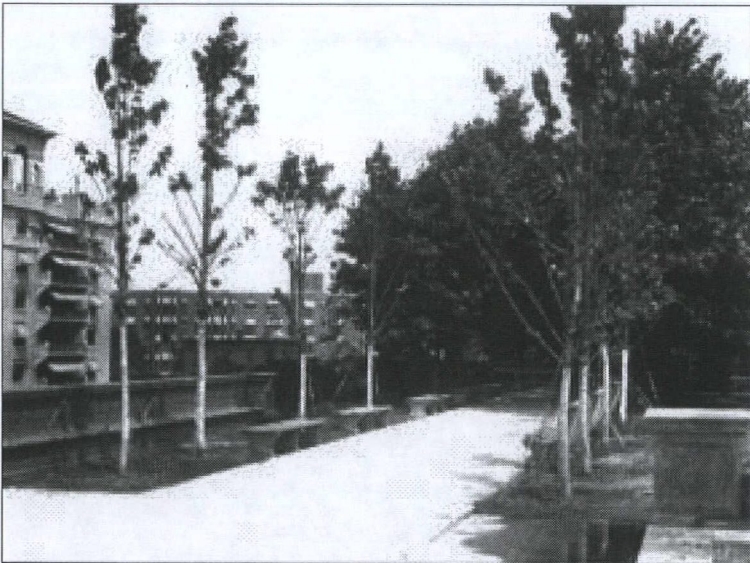
72) Northwest hillside garden plantings, looking southeast from great terrace (RCP-CRF, July 14, 1936).



Great terrace with new elms. (RCP-CRF, June 15, 1936).



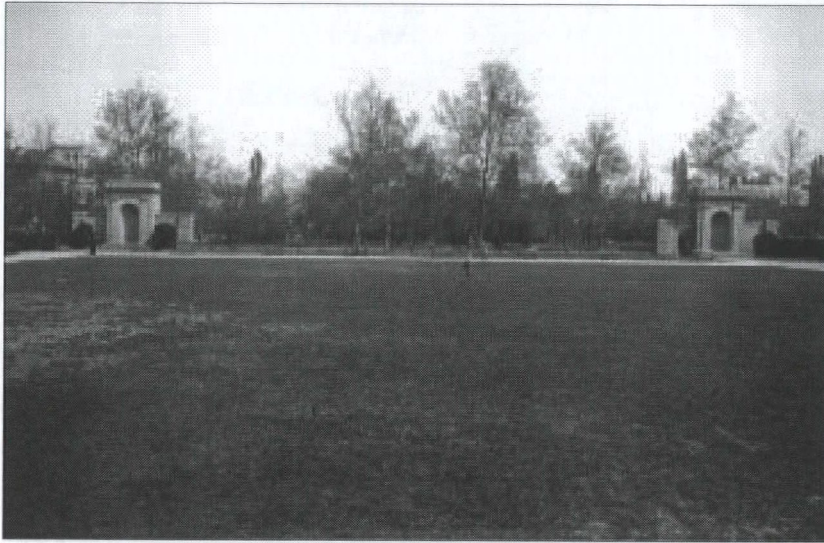
East ascent plantings, looking south toward Dante statue and Buchanan Memorial. (RCP-CRF, July 14, 1936).



New linden trees to finish south end of linden alley. Note benches adjacent to walk. (RCP-CRF, July 14, 1936).



Plantings between west ascent and 16th Street wall, looking south towards lower plaza and downtown Washington. (RCP-CRF, July 14, 1936).



North end of park (RCP-CRF, July 14, 1936).



Completed plantings along east ascent, looking north west towards great wall (RCP-CRF, September 21, 1936). Note massed plantings covering ground on hillside garden and near Dante statue.



Great terrace planting showing elms in raised beds (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).



Construction of east ascent north of Dante (RCP-CRF, no date).



Great terrace and Joan of Arc after installation of planters and raising of elms. Note what appears to be gravel in the planters around the elms. (RCP-CRF, September 9, 1936).



Elm in raised planter. Note elms planted behind foreground elms in south end of mall. (RCP-CRF, c. 1936).

Photos: 1937



Plantings in informal gardens east of mall (RCP-CRF, June 6, 1937).



Plantings in informal gardens west of mall (RCP-CRF, June 6, 1937).

Photos: 1938



Plantings along west ascent and 16th Street, looking south towards downtown Washington, D.C. from great terrace. (RCP-CRF, June 1938).

Photos: 1939



*Sycamore tree with European Hornbeams
around it in tree well in lower plaza
(MRCE, September 1939).*



View south east across cascades from western end of great terrace showing the effects of the temporary night lighting (MRCE, September 1939).



View east across the lower plaza and reflecting pool with highlighted spray jets. Buchanan Memorial is in background (MRCE, September 1939)



View from eastern end of great terrace south over hillside gardens and lower plaza (MRCE, September 1939).



Fountain niches at the upper end of the cascades with temporary lighting (MRCE, September 1939).



Lower end of the cascades with temporary lighting (MRCE, September 1939).

Photos: 1941



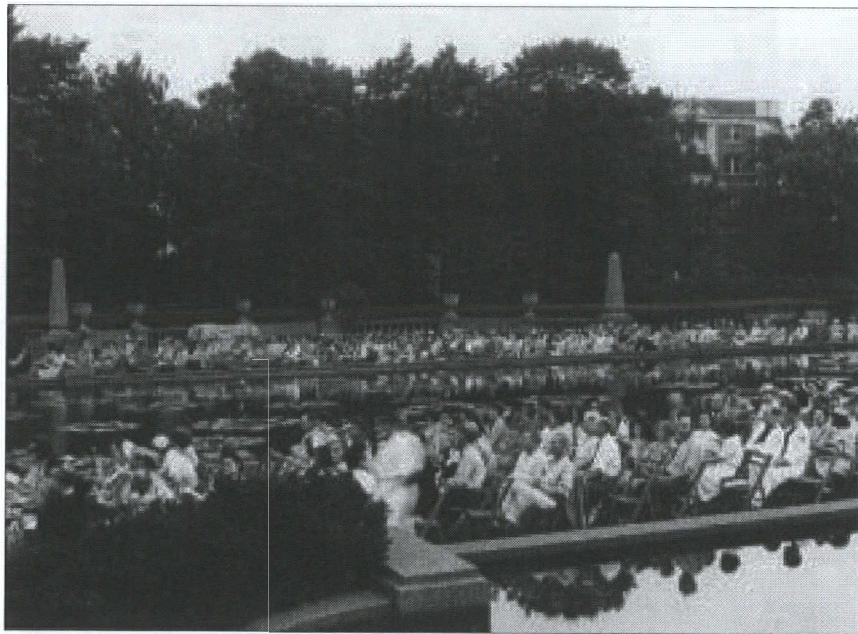
Nighttime concert at reflecting pool with temporary bandstand (RCP-CRF, September 8, 1941).

Photos: 1942

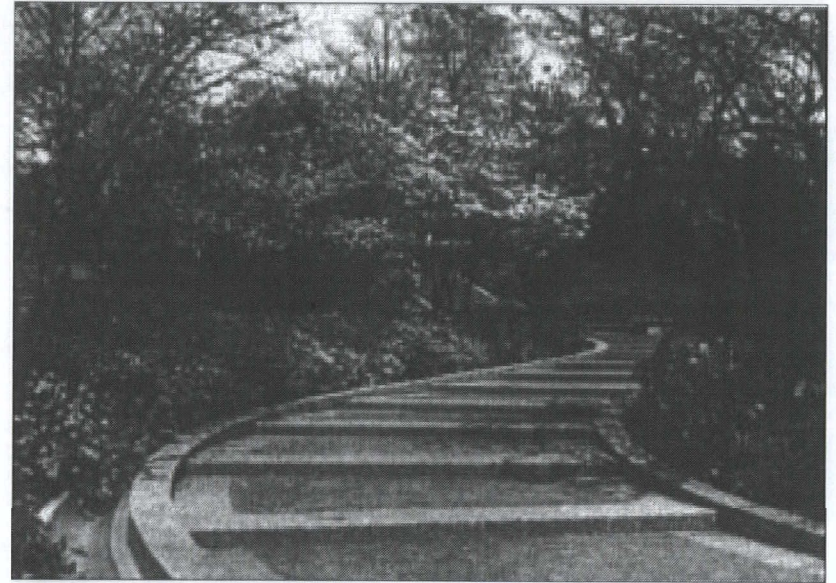


Ticket selling for a dance recital, lower plaza (RCP-CRF, July 21, 1942).

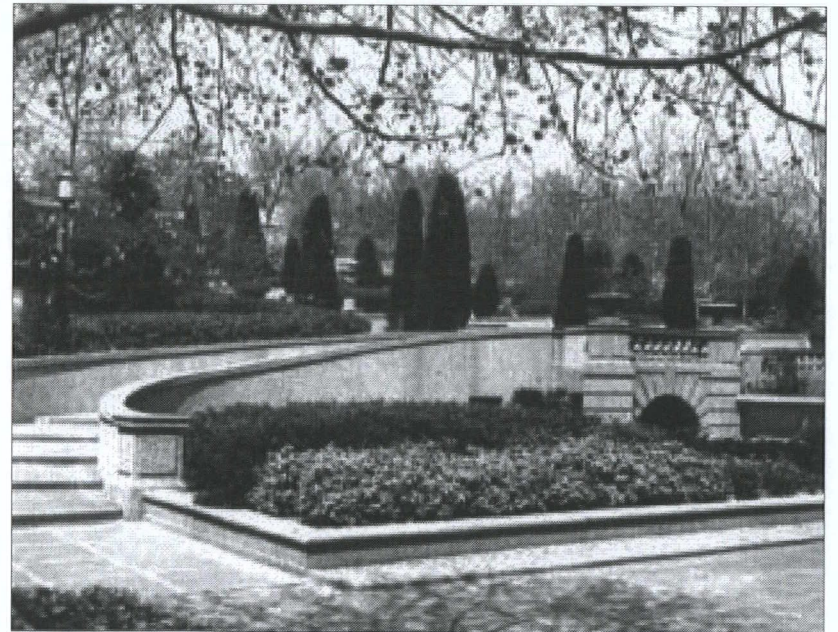
Photos: 1944



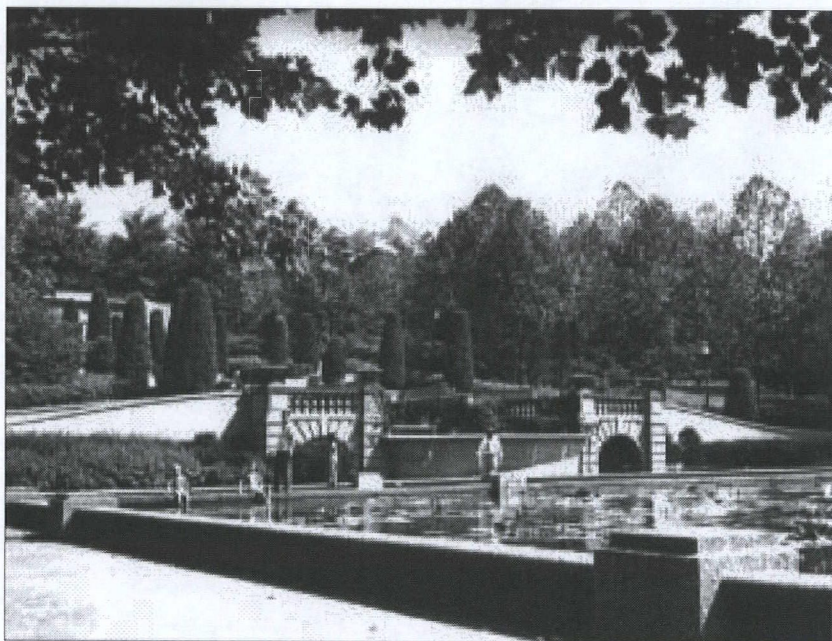
Concert seating along sides of reflecting pool in lower plaza (RCP-CRF, c. 1944).



Plantings along east ascent (RCP-CRF, April 29, 1944).



View looking northeast from base of west cascade stairway (RCP-CRF, c. 1944).



View northeast across reflecting pool towards hillside gardens (RCP-CRF, c. 1944).



Lower pools (RCP-CRF, c. 1944).

Photos: 1945



View from west stairway of great terrace to southeast across cascades (MRCE, April 1, 1945).

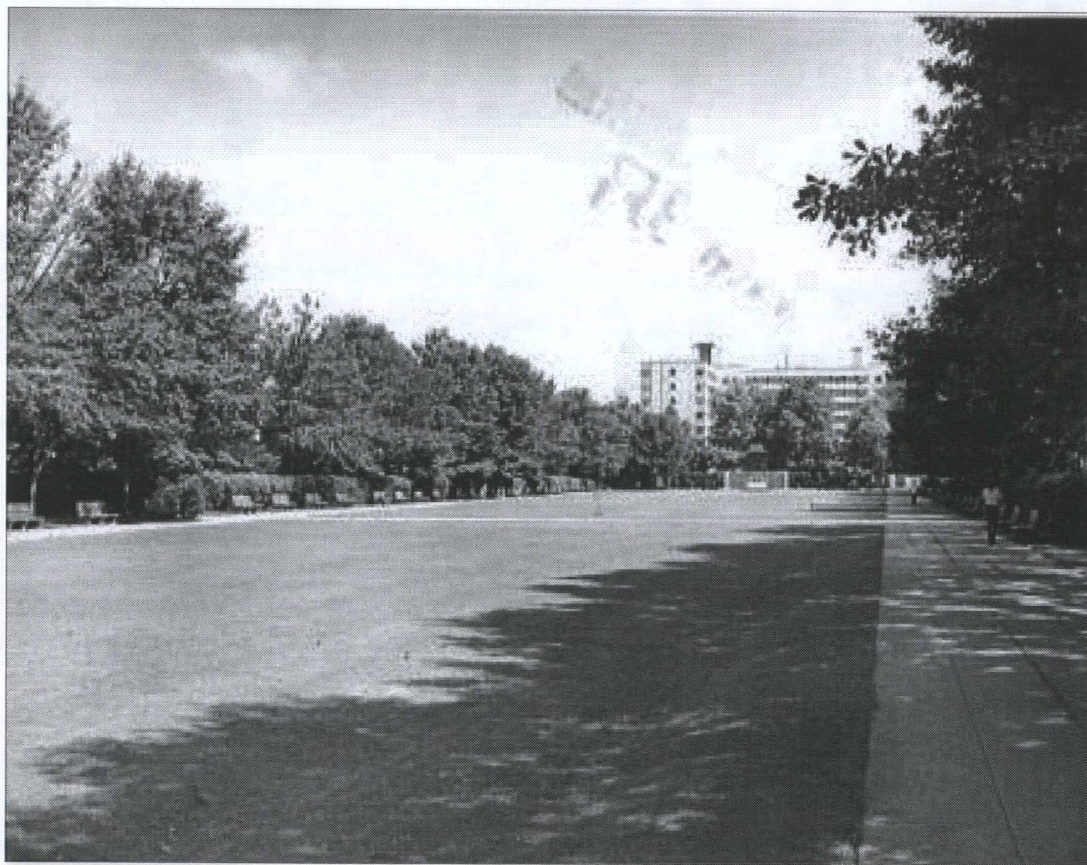


Informal plantings along 15th Street side of mall, looking north toward Euclid Street (RCP-CRF, March 24, 1945).



Strollers along east ascent with Dante statue visible in background. (RCP-CRF, April 1, 1945).

Photos: 1952



View from east mall walkway to the north across the open lawn (MRCE, June 10, 1952).

Photos: 1954



Central and eastern fountain niche at the head of the cascades (MRCE, October 9, 1954).

Photos: 1961



Armillary sphere with the cascades in the background (MRCE, September 9, 1961).

Photos: 1963



Floral display at the northern end of the park with ornamental iron fence with vines in background (MRCE, April, 2, 1963).



View from lower plaza looking north along east ascent (MRCE, April, 20, 1963).



View of east ascent from the great terrace with Dante in the background (MRCE, April 20, 1963)

Photos: 1964



View south along 16th street retaining wall with linden alley to the left and plantings between the retaining walls to the right (MARS, November 1964).



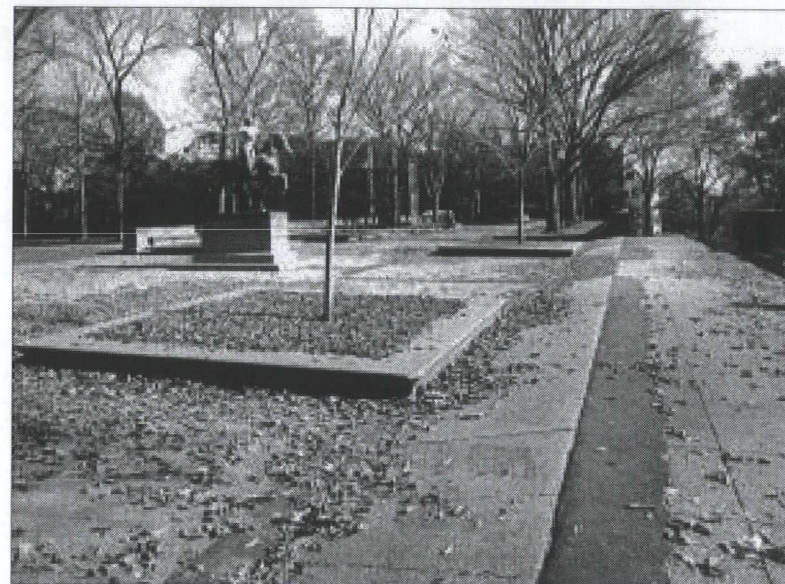
16th Street retaining wall (MRCE, November 1964).



View south along 16th Street retaining wall with linden alley to the left (MRCE, November 1964).



View east along great terrace showing elms in planters (MRCE, November 1964).



View from west of Joan of Arc statue to the east along the great terrace showing settlement along the terrace (MRCE, November 1964).



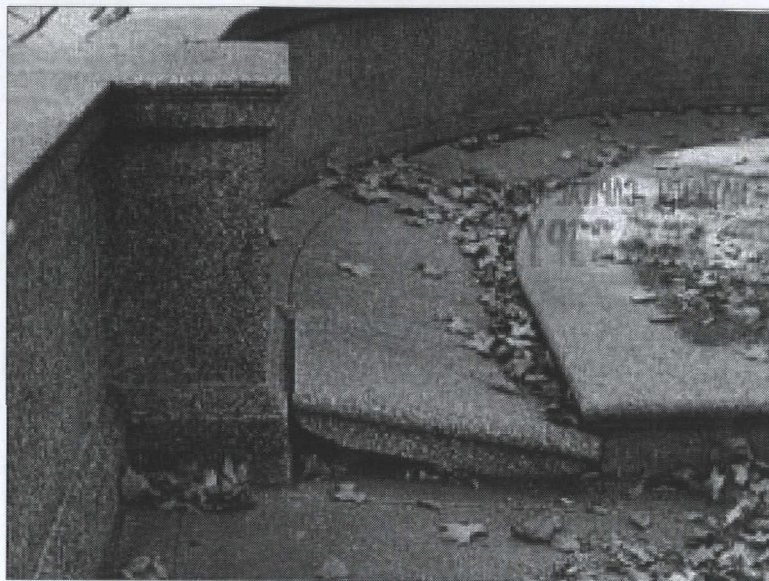
View of fountain on 16th Street end of great terrace (MRCE, November 1964).



View from vantage point just east of Joan of Arc looking west along great terrace (MRCE, November 1964).



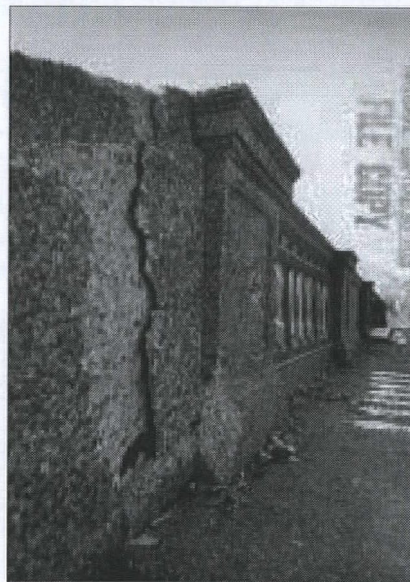
Concrete cracking and temporary patch (MRCE, November 1964). Pavement repaired in 1982.



Settlement at great terrace (MRCE, November 1964). Repaired in 1982.

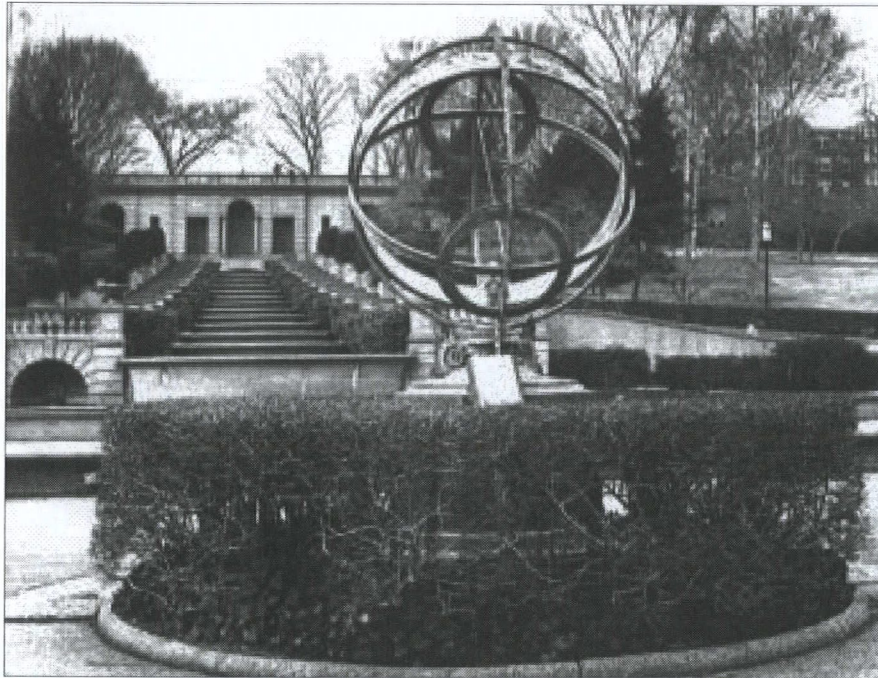


Settling and concrete damage along great terrace (MRCE, November 1964). Repaired in 1982.

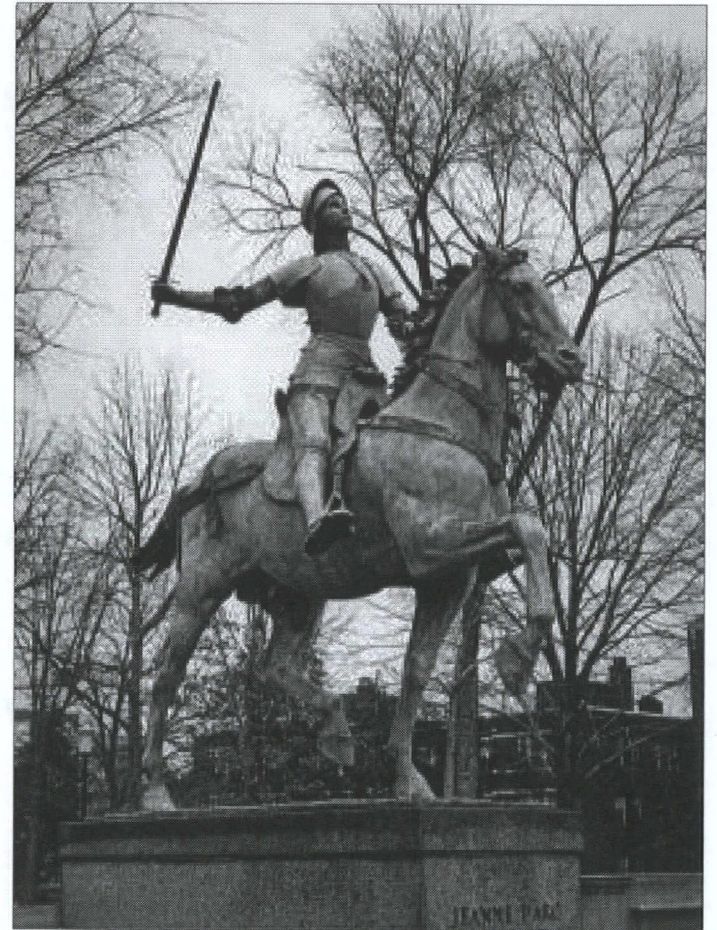


Spalling concrete along great terrace (MRCE, November 1964). Repaired in 1982.

Photos: 1965



View north through armillary sphere toward cascades (RCP-CRF, 1965).

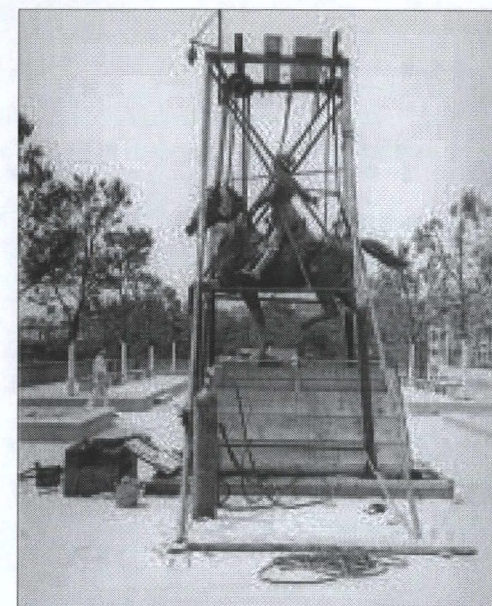


Joan of Arc (MRCE, December 15, 1965).

Photos: Unknown Date



Joan of Arc, France (MRCE, no date).



Joan of Arc during construction of great terrace (MRCE, no date).



Joan of Arc during construction of great terrace (MRCE, no date).



Joan of Arc during construction of great terrace (MRCE, no date).

Appendix 2:
Persons Significant to
the Development of
the Park

George Burnap

As the designer of the first plan for Meridian Hill Park, George Burnap worked as a landscape architect for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Washington, D. C., between 1912 and 1917. Before coming to Washington, Burnap was a professor at Cornell University, where he became acquainted with and ultimately had a great influence on his student, Horace Peaslee. When Burnap left Cornell to join the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and head the design for Meridian Hill Park, Peaslee accompanied him and received an appointment as Landscape Designer in that office.

Burnap's conceptual design for the park was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts in 1914, at which time it was presented to Congress.¹ Even though components of the Burnap plan were subsequently changed, it was important because it established the framework for the park design. While Burnap's design for the upper level of the park was changed into an open mall, and his proposals for the hillside gardens were simplified, elements such as the great terrace, cascades, and reflecting pool of the lower level were incorporated into the final design.²

In 1917, George Burnap left the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds because of a conflict between his public and private practice, and Horace Peaslee succeeded him as Landscape Architect and Architect of Meridian Hill Park.

Besides his teaching and his work on Meridian Hill Park, Burnap was the author of a well-known book, *Parks: Their Design, Equipment and Use*, which was the first volume of a series of four books on landscape architecture. Burnap had a reputation as a practical designer, one who recognized the importance of incorporating pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns, as well as requiring that sculpture be suitable to the park as a livable place for park users.³

1 HABS, p. 14

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

John J. Earley

While Horace Peaslee designed the architectural features of the park, the process for producing the exposed aggregate concrete was developed by John J. Earley.

John Joseph Earley was born in New York City in 1881, the son of a fourth generation Irish stone carver and ecclesiastical artist. At the age of seventeen, he entered his father's studio in Rosslyn, Virginia, as an apprentice to learn sculpture, modelmaking, and stonecarving. Here, he developed skills that helped him in his later career.

After his father's death, John Earley took over the studio and changed the focus of the work from stone and sculpture to plaster and stucco. The Earley Studio had no trouble getting contracts for both government and private work, including the remodeling of the interior of the White House during President Roosevelt's first term, and the elaborate main lobby of the new building for the Willard Hotel, constructed in 1902 at Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street NW in Washington, D.C.⁴

In 1906, Earley began investigating exposed aggregate concrete. He was attracted to the use of color in Byzantine architecture, and was interested in trying to duplicate this effect in concrete. In 1915, John Earley worked closely with the Commission of Fine Arts and produced a full-size mock up of a wall section for Meridian Hill Park. While Cass Gilbert, Sr., Chairman of the Commission, suggested that an acceptable finish for the walls might be produced by imitating Italian pebble mosaics, it was Earley that developed the technique of mixing the aggregate in the concrete and scrubbing the surface to produce a natural-looking pebble finish. Earley called the result "architectural concrete", and it was used with great success for the walls, balustrades, benches, urns, and obelisks of Meridian Hill Park.

After Meridian Hill Park, Earley went on to design high-quality prefabricated mosaic and relief panels during the 1930's. Earley's polychrome mosaic panels were incorporated into both the U. S. Treasury and the U.S. Department of Justice buildings in Washington, D.C.⁵ Earley built five experimental houses in suburban Maryland, called the "Polychrome Houses", that incorporated crushed rock, gravel, and even glass of different colors into the concrete wall panels.

4 Frederick W. Cron. *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful*. (Centennial Publications, Fort Collins: CO 1977), p. 7.

5 HABS, p. 16

Mary Henderson

While Peaslee, Burnap, Vitale, and Earley are responsible for the design and appearance of Meridian Hill Park, it is Mary Henderson who lobbied Congress in support of the acquisition of the land and its development as a park.

Mary Henderson was the wife of Missouri Senator John B. Henderson, who introduced the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution that abolished slavery. In 1887, after he had retired from the Senate, John and Mary Henderson returned to Washington from Missouri and bought up dozens of lots outside the northern boundary of the city in the area known as Meridian Hill. At the foot of the hill, the Hendersons built a large brownstone home that became known as “Henderson’s Castle.” Mary Henderson’s interest in the immediate neighborhood, which coincided with the City Beautiful Movement of the early 20th century, ultimately led to the construction of the park.⁶

As a visionary, activist, and health enthusiast, Mary Henderson was determined to make Meridian Hill the gateway to the Nation’s Capital, and poured her energies into accomplishing this goal.⁷ She also realized that she could make a great deal of money buying and selling land in the area, and in doing so could control the type of development that would take place there. Mrs. Henderson bought blocks of real estate and had elaborate residences constructed that she sold as embassies. Her architect, George Oakley Totten, Jr., designed nearly a dozen buildings on 15th and 16th Streets in the Meridian Hill area to enhance the area for diplomatic uses.⁸

With a genuine interest in civic improvement, Mrs. Henderson frequently lobbied Congress for various projects to improve and beautify the Meridian Hill area. In 1900, she supported a plan by architect Franklin W. Smith to construct a colossal presidential mansion on Meridian Hill to replace the White House. However, this plan never came to fruition.

In 1911, mostly because of Mary Henderson’s persistent lobbying efforts, Meridian Hill was considered as a possible site for the construction of a memorial to Abraham Lincoln. John Russell Pope, who also designed the Temple of the Scottish Rite and the Lincoln Birthplace memorial, prepared designs for the memorial. Pope proposed a towering memorial recalling the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus that would have straddled 16th Street, a design rejected by the Commission of Fine Arts because the strength and size of the structure did not fit in with the res-

6 *Washington Renaissance: Architecture and Landscape Architecture of Meridian Hill*. Meridian House International, Washington, D.C., 1989, p. 1.

7 *Ibid.*

8 HABS, p. 13.

idential nature of its surroundings.⁹ Even after the Commission rejected Meridian Hill as a site for the Lincoln Memorial, Mrs. Henderson petitioned Congress in 1912 with another design for the memorial that she had commissioned by Frederick Murphy and W. B. Olmstead. This design too was rejected.

Mrs. Henderson's most well-known crusade was to change the name of 16th Street to "Avenue of the Presidents," and to line the street with busts of all the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the United States. While she actually succeeded in having legislation passed to change the name of the street in 1913, the Commission of Fine Arts denied her request to construct the busts. One year later, because the name "Avenue of the Presidents" proved to be unpopular, the original 16th Street name was restored.¹⁰

When the Commission finally decided to develop Meridian Hill as a public park, The land was purchased from Mary Henderson. Several times, she was successful in persuading Congress to appropriate funds, so that work on the park would continue. Following her death in 1931, the Commission of Fine Arts praised her efforts and her vision of Meridian Hill. A report by the Commission stated: "Persistently she labored during four decades, persuading and convincing Senators and Representatives; single-handed and alone she appeared before committees of Congress to urge approval for the work of development. She won."¹¹

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Washington Renaissance: Architecture and Landscape Architecture of Meridian Hill* (Washington, Meridian House International, 1989), p. 5.

11 HABS, p. 13.

Horace Peaslee

As primary architect for Meridian Hill Park from 1917 to 1935, Horace Peaslee played the most influential role in the development of Meridian Hill Park. At Cornell University, from which he graduated in 1910, he majored in architecture and minored in landscape architecture.¹² Peaslee remained at Cornell as a resident fellow during the year 1911-1912, and then came to Washington, D.C. after his appointment to the United States Office of Public Buildings and Grounds.¹³ At the time Peaslee was appointed to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, George Burnap was directing the design of Meridian Hill Park.

In 1914, Peaslee accompanied Burnap and members of the Commission of Fine Arts on a trip to Spain, France, Switzerland, and most importantly, Italy, to study the European gardens that became the inspiration for Meridian Hill Park. While in Europe, Peaslee sketched and photographed walls, ornaments, and water features that influenced his 1917 and 1920 plans.

In 1917, at about the same time the United States was entering World War I, George Burnap resigned as head of the Meridian Hill Park project and returned to private practice. Horace Peaslee was named as his replacement in the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, and remained the architect in charge of design for the next 18 years. Later, Peaslee described his responsibilities: "From a beginning as Landscape Architectural Designer in 1915, through successive stages as Landscape Architect, and then Architect of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, and finally as Architect or Consulting Architect in independent practice, I either personally prepared, or directly supervised the preparation of all drawings for the visible construction of the park and drafted the specifications covering visible design."¹⁴

Despite the demands of his position at the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, Peaslee was actively involved in a wide variety of professional and civic affairs. Between 1914 and 1916, he was a visiting instructor in landscape architecture at the University of Illinois.¹⁵ From 1917 to 1919, he served in the Army Engineer Corps as a captain, and was responsible for designing a large number of "temporary" buildings that were erected during World War I.

In 1921, Peaslee helped organize the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, a citizens' group concerned with planning, parks, and design. He served alternately as the Committee's Vice

12 Peaslee was a student of George Burnap and was greatly influenced by him.

13 HABS, p. 14.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

15 Thomas W. Dolan, "Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C." (Graduate Thesis, School of Architecture, University of Virginia, May 1983), p. 20.

Chairman and Chairman until his death in 1959.¹⁶ As a member of the American Institute of Architects, Peaslee served as Chairman of the Washington Metropolitan Chapter as well as Vice Chairman of the AIA between 1930 and 1934. In 1932, Peaslee organized the Joint Committee on the National Capital, a group of architects, landscape architects, and city planners from national professional and civic organizations.

In 1936, Peaslee was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and was cited for "a distinguished record in the interest of civil and national government, years of effort for the institute's welfare, often at personal sacrifice."¹⁷ In addition, Peaslee served as architect for the Public Buildings Administration in Washington between 1938 and 1942, and as secretary of the Central Housing Committee, United States Agencies, from 1935 to 1943.¹⁸

Along with his public commitments, Peaslee's private practice included designing residential, commercial, and institutional buildings in Washington, D. C.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

18 *Ibid.* p. 21.

Ferruccio Vitale

As chief designer for the planting plan, and later as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts, Ferruccio Vitale played an integral role in the design and development of Meridian Hill Park. An Italian designer, the son of an architect, and one who was intensely interested in urban planning, Vitale's background is clearly evident in the planting plan for the park.

Born in Florence and educated in Italy, Vitale first came to the United States in 1898 when he was appointed military attaché at the Italian Embassy.¹⁹ However, his intense passion for landscape architecture soon took over, and within a few years Vitale resigned his military position to pursue his true desire. Upon returning to Italy, Vitale studied landscape at Florence, Turin, and Paris, and after graduation, worked in his father's architecture office.

In 1904, he returned to the United States and went into private practice in New York City as a principal in the firm of Vitale, Brinkerhoff and Geifert. In 1919, he became chief designer of the planting plan for Meridian Hill Park, and in July of that year, his plan was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts.²⁰ This plan was incorporated into the final simplified plan for the park in 1920. In 1927, Vitale was appointed to the Commission of Fine Arts by President Calvin Coolidge, where he continued to take an active role in the development of the park, serving on the CFA until 1932.²¹

19 HABS, p. 17.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*

Appendix 3: National Historic Landmark Nomination

Figures 1 through 19, 22, and six pages of photographs originally part of the National Historic Landmark Nomination form on Meridian Hill Park are not included in this Appendix. The figures are HABS drawings and illustrations found in the body of this CLR. The photographic views are also covered by the body of the CLR.

The 1972 National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form was also attached to the National Historic Landmark Nomination form and is also not included in this Appendix.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Page 1

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: MERIDIAN HILL PARK

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Bounded by 16th, 15th, Euclid, and Florida Avenue, NW Not for publication: _____

City/Town: Washington Vicinity: _____

State: DC County: N/A Code: 001 Zip Code: 20009

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: _____
Public-Local: _____
Public-State: _____
Public-Federal: X

Category of Property

Building(s): _____
District: _____
Site: X
Structure: _____
Object: _____

Number of Resources within Property Contributing

1
24
6
31

Noncontributing

_____ buildings
_____ sites
_____ structures
_____ objects
_____ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 31

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 2**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ____ Entered in the National Register _____
____ Determined eligible for the National Register _____
____ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 3**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Landscape

Sub: Park

Current: Landscape

Sub: Park

7. DESCRIPTION**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:**Late 19th and Early 20th Century
Revivals (Italian and French
Renaissance)**MATERIALS:**

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Exposed aggregate concrete

Roof: N/A

Other:

Pavement Materials: Exposed aggregate concrete, concrete, asphalt.

Plant Materials: Various species of trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers.

Fountains

& Other Objects: Exposed aggregate concrete, metal (bronze), stone (marble).

Site Furnishings: Concrete, wood, metal (cast iron).

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 4**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Meridian Hill Park is located just above Florida Avenue between 15th and 16th Streets in northwest Washington, DC. The design of the 11.88 acre park was inspired by Italian villas of the 16th and 17th centuries (fig. 1). The park is divided into two principal areas: the lower park, with a water cascade of linked basins, symmetric stairways, and a large reflecting pool surrounded by a plaza; and the upper park, with an open mall, wooded areas flanking the mall, and a broad terrace overlooking the lower park. The park contains a number of statues and memorials, including the Buchanan Memorial. Meridian Hill Park was designed and built between 1912 and 1936, and has been under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service since 1933.

The park's western edge, 16th Street, is an important north-south axis in the original 1791 plan for Washington by Pierre Charles L'Enfant (fig. 4). This axis was proposed by some (including Thomas Jefferson) as the official meridian to serve as a baseline for future surveying and navigation, and the high ground about a mile and a half due north of the White House was thus named Meridian Hill in about 1815 by its owner, David Porter. The idea of a park at the site goes back at least to the 1901 McMillan plan for the city, which suggested a park on both sides of 16th Street at Meridian Hill in recognition of the site's panoramic views and its important position relative to the L'Enfant plan for the city.

The land comprising Meridian Hill Park was purchased by Congress in 1910, due in part to the efforts of Mary Foote Henderson, a private citizen and park advocate with considerable real estate interests in the area.¹ The Washington D.C. Commission of Fine Arts led the effort to construct a park on Meridian Hill and later monitored design and construction progress. The United States Office of Public Buildings and Grounds supervised construction between 1912 and 1933, and the National Park Service oversaw the park's completion between 1933 and 1936, the year the park officially opened.²

The first plans for the park were drawn up by landscape architect George Burnap, a former Cornell professor employed with the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, and were approved by the Commission of Fine Arts in 1914. Burnap's Italianate design suited the steep topography and exploited the views from the crest of the escarpment (fig. 5). The features of his design were centered on a single longitudinal axis extending north-south through the site. The elevated north end of the park featured a fountain, formal gardens, and a great terrace. A water cascade of linked basins was planned for the steep slope to the south, terminated by rectangular reflecting pools in a plaza at the

¹Mary Foote Henderson was the wife of Senator John B. Henderson. Their residence on the west side of 16th Street above Florida Avenue ("Henderson Castle") was begun in 1888 and remained an area landmark until its demolition in 1949. For decades, both Senator and Mrs. Henderson developed property in the vicinity of Meridian Hill and encouraged the location of embassies and other important buildings along 16th Street.

²The principal facts about Meridian Hill Park presented in this nomination are drawn from M.K. Schlefer's Meridian Hill Park, Historic American Buildings Survey No. DC-532, available in the Prints and Photographs Reading Room of the Library of Congress. Ms. Schlefer's footnotes and bibliography should be consulted for references to pertinent primary and other sources. The HABS drawings (Robert R. Harvey, et al.) are also an important source of information.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 5**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

foot of the hill. The great terrace, above the cascade, was the main cross axis in the plan and offered views of the lower park below and of Washington in the distance.

Initial site work began before World War I. By 1916, three dozen buildings had been cleared from the upper portion of the park, where a level raised area was established by building massive retaining walls along 16th Street (fig. 3). Below the great terrace, the lower park was graded in a regular slope. The total change in elevation from Euclid Street on the north and Florida Avenue to the south is about 75 feet.

In 1917, landscape architect Horace W. Peaslee replaced Burnap at the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and revised the design for Meridian Hill Park (fig. 6). Peaslee, Burnap's student at Cornell and later his assistant in Washington, remained true to Burnap's intentions. Peaslee abandoned the elaborate formal gardens of the upper portion of the park, however, and replaced them with an open mall. By 1920 the plan had been further modified with the elimination of a bridge over the cascade and the simplification of the reflecting pool area. A planting plan by Vitale, Brinckerhoff and Geiffert, a prominent landscape architectural firm based in New York, was incorporated into the design by this point (fig. 7). By 1923 the upper mall was completed and work was proceeding on the terrace and water features. Limited funding determined further changes to the design as construction proceeded: a small concert pavilion just north of the principal cross axis on the great terrace was eliminated, as was a monumental entrance directly onto the terrace from 16th Street. Structural work proceeded slowly but by 1932 it was largely complete. The park was officially opened in 1936 after a hiatus in construction activity following the transfer of the property to the National Park Service in 1933.

As important as historical allusions were in the design of Meridian Hill, the construction of the park relied on techniques and materials advanced for their time. The terraces, stairs, walls, and pavements--almost all the structural elements in this highly structured landscape--were rendered in precast and cast-in-place concrete, treated in a variety of ways to expose the different aggregates used in the mixes. The concrete contractor, John J. Earley, was a highly skilled craftsman who interpreted mosaic pavements, urns, balustrades, benches, niches, and planting containers in concrete of varied form, texture, and color (fig. 8). Retaining walls with benches, curving stairways, apsidal niches, and many other details were formed with sensitivity and precision through a series of technical innovations in casting and finishing. Varied colors and sizes of the exposed aggregates artfully recalled the patterns and textures of the decorative mosaic and tile work of Renaissance masons. The articulation of the formal historical models of the park in this advanced construction technology created a striking juxtaposition that lent a unique appearance and character to the park.

A number of important monuments and memorials have accreted to the park since the 1920s. The Buchanan Memorial (Hans Schuler, sc.; William Gordon Beecher, arch.), the largest in the park, was one of the first planned although it was not dedicated in its site at the east end of the lower park until 1930. It remains the only memorial to President James Buchanan in Washington. In 1922, Joan of Arc, a copy of the figure by Paul Dubois at Reims Cathedral, was installed directly on the main cross axis of the park in the center of the great terrace. Dante (Ettore Ximenes, sc.) was also put in place in

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 6**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1922. A marble allegorical figure of Serenity (Jose Clara, sc.) was installed in the upper park in 1925. In 1932, a six-foot high bronze armillary sphere (Carl Paul Jennewein, sc.) was placed at the center of the circle inscribed by the terminal exedra in the lower park.

In the years following its completion, the park featured indirect and underwater lighting which were enjoyed by evening concert goers during regular "starlight concerts." The park also reached a high point horticulturally during these years, as many hedges, vines, and groves established themselves and began to approximate the architecturally structured verdure of Italian prototypes.

Today the park presents a striking aspect: a Renaissance villa landscape, literally recast in the strongest, most durable of materials--exposed aggregate concrete--to serve as a modern public park. The concrete elements show only occasional signs of wear from 50 years of constant use. Despite some high-rise development that cuts off views to the south, the overall physical appearance of Meridian Hill Park has retained a high degree of integrity. Recent restoration efforts have assured the continued maintenance of the massive cascade, and many shrubs and trees that have died or been removed over the years have been replaced.

Thanks to durable materials and furnishings, the spatial organization of the landscape remains strong. The converging paths of the mall, lined with white oaks, create a forced perspective that exaggerates the perception of distance in the space. Although the hedges that once flanked the mall have been removed for increased visibility, the groves of oaks still define the space. Winding paths near the edges of the mall retain an intended air of mystery and intimacy, thanks in part to the varied topography of these areas. The highly structured character of the landscape has helped preserve its overall compositional integrity. The sectional relationships created by the great terrace, cascade, and flanking stairways, for example, are intact. The views down to the lower plaza and reflecting pool, and other important views retain their essential compositions.

New priorities in the management of the park's vegetation have caused the greatest change from the historical appearance of the park. In the Renaissance villa, the cypress, fir, and juniper of the *boschi*, as well as other hedges and vines, articulated the spatial organization as much as the masonry retaining walls and terraces. In the original designs for Meridian Hill vines, hedges, and trees were as essential to the composition as the concrete structures underlying them. Partly because of the increased cost of intensive horticultural care, however, and partly because of security needs, many of the shrubs and vines have disappeared, and some of the yews, hemlocks, and other trees in the original plans have not been replaced.

This has had the greatest effect on the slopes around the east and west ascents flanking the cascade in the lower park. The plants in these areas have been thinned drastically since the 1960s and the slopes have become sunny, open spaces. Early views of the park show that these slopes were heavily planted, producing a framing effect along the cascade, as seen from the lower park (fig.19). This visual composition, featured in the original designs, recalls similar arrangements in Italian Baroque gardens, such as the Villa Garzoni, Collodi (1652, fig. 20) and the Villa Torlonia, Frascati (1623, fig. 21), in which massive cascades, seen from below, are enframed by dense groves of trees.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 7**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Recent work at Meridian Hill has included plantings of evergreens along the cascade and multi-stem kousa dogwood and London planes on the flanking slopes.

The disappearance of the armillary sphere has probably been the most serious loss in terms of sculpture (fig. 22). In the upper park, "Serenity" has been virtually destroyed by vandalism and exposure. Otherwise, the presence of a Presidential memorial, several fine statues, and the general sculptural quality of the many concrete structural elements continue to enhance the park's strong aesthetic presence.

The social context of Meridian Hill Park has changed considerably since the early twentieth century, and it continues to do so. There is no reason to assume, however, that the original vision of the Meridian Hill Park as a classical villa landscape at the center of a vibrant and interesting residential neighborhood should be considered any less valid or desirable because of these changes. The park has provided just such a center and aesthetic presence continuously since 1936. It has proven to be remarkably durable and flexible over time. The present appearance of the park has benefitted greatly in recent years from renewed attention by the National Park Service, and from the activities of a committed group of area residents and volunteers, the Friends of Meridian Hill. The results have been significant, and the park appears today (with the exceptions noted above) much as it did in 1936.

Description of Contributing Resources Within the Historic Site:

(N.B. The classification of contributing resources as sites, structures, and objects refers only to the headings in Section 3 of this form. All resources described here contribute to the Meridian Hill Park site overall.)

Site (1):

PRE-EXISTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES: As a result of the considerable demolition, regrading, and construction involved in the creation of Meridian Hill Park, pre-existing natural or cultural features were not incorporated into the design (figs. 2, 3). The location of the historical meridian, however, and the general topographic situation of the park were important to its location and conception (fig. 4).

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION: The spatial organization of Meridian Hill Park (fig. 1) represents an application of Renaissance design principles to a new context and use. The park is set on a slope, facing south, with views of Washington in the distance. The site is organized first by a central axis and then by a principal cross axis; it is then subdivided into more or less symmetrical areas. Large structured terraces provide viewing platforms and define the principal sectional relationships. Retaining walls provide flat areas for decorative pavements and reflecting pools organized symmetrically around the central axis. The overall landscape composition is held together by strong visual axes, although movement through the site is not necessarily along those axes. The converging paths of the mall, lined with white oaks, create a forced perspective that exaggerates the perception of distance in the space. The winding paths flanking the mall near the edges of the upper park have retained their intended air of mystery and intimacy. The highly structured character of the landscape has helped preserve its overall compositional integrity.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 8**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

TOPOGRAPHY: The topography (or sectional relationships) at Meridian Hill Park (figs. 9-13) are salient design characteristics; in general they persist in an almost unchanged condition. The great terrace, the berms and swales at the perimeter of the upper section of the park, the retaining walls at the edges of the park, and the slopes and stairways flanking the cascade are all prominent expressions of the design's topography.

VEGETATION: Most of the vegetation at Meridian Hill Park (figs. 14-18) was planted as part of the original construction, or planted later either in kind or within the original design intent. There is very little vegetation that represents an inappropriate addition or which is the result of uncontrolled volunteer growth. On the contrary, the loss of original vegetation, not the addition of plants, represents the greatest change in this category (as indicated above in the description). Existing vegetation of special importance to the original design intent at Meridian Hill includes: the rows of white oaks flanking the mall; the linden alley on the upper terrace; the evergreen shrubs and trees along the edge of the cascade; the shade trees and understory trees on the slopes flanking the cascade; the shrubs and trees around the perimeter of the park; the aquatic plants in the reflecting pools; and the shade trees on the upper and lower terraces.

Structures (24):

CIRCULATION: The paths of Meridian Hill Park are virtually all in their original location; many of them still feature their original concrete pavement. Where pavement has been replaced, it has usually been in a manner consistent with original design intent. Paths that contribute to the historic site include the two converging paths on the upper mall, the two winding paths on the east and west edges of the upper park. Also contributing in this category are the stairs and ramps in the lower section of the park called the East and West Ascents. Other contributing paths are included as parts of larger structures, specifically the upper and lower terraces.

LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES: The highly structured quality of the Meridian Hill landscape makes it possible to consider most of the landscape as a series of structures. These include: the Cascade; the Reflecting Pool; the Terrace Retaining Wall; the North, South, East, and West Walls; the Lower Terrace; the Upper Terrace; the Comfort Station (now an open pavilion, as it was in the original design); the Southwest, Southeast, Northwest, Northeast, West, and East Entrances; the Fountain Niche; and the Arched Entrance.

Objects (6):**OBJECTS:**

Statuary and fountains of all types appeared in Renaissance villa gardens and figured in the plans for Meridian Hill Park as well. Since the loss of the Armillary Sphere, the remaining sculptural pieces are: the Buchanan Memorial (Hans Schuler, sc.; William Gordon Beecher, arch.), 1930; Joan of Arc (Paul Dubois, sc.), 1922; Dante (Ettore Ximenes, sc.), 1922; Serenity (Jose Clara, sc.), 1925. The East Fountain and West Fountain on the upper terrace also have retained their original appearance and function.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 9**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally: Applicable National
Register Criteria:A B C X D Criteria Considerations
(Exceptions):A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Theme(s): XVII. Landscape Architecture

Areas of Significance: Landscape Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1910-1936

Significant Dates: 1910, 1917, 1920, 1923, 1933

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: George Burnap
Horace W. Peaslee
John J. Earley
Ferruccio Vitale

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 10**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

CONTEXT STATEMENT

Meridian Hill Park is a nationally significant example of Neoclassicist American park design of the early 20th century.¹ Other examples of comparable significance might include George Kessler's Paseo in Kansas City, or Lusby Simpson and Gilmore Clarke's Bryant Park in New York. These are major landmarks of a significant landscape design movement that shaped public spaces in American cities for more than 50 years.

Neoclassicist landscape design in the United States became popularized through changing tastes in residential landscapes at the turn of the century. In the late 19th century, a growing class of wealthy Americans looked to create private landscapes that would reflect their taste and culture. Between the 1890s and 1929 landscape architects, who had previously been more involved in public park and parkway projects, increasingly undertook ambitious residential landscape commissions, especially in the prestigious suburbs developing around industrial cities in the Northeast and Midwest.² Residential landscapes (except for the largest estates) were usually smaller than public park and parkway systems, and the different needs and desires of private clients required a different approach, bringing a changing aesthetic to the practice of landscape architecture.

Many of these Neoclassicist landscapes were products of the contemporary fascination with Italian villas and gardens. One of those most fascinated was Charles Adams Platt, a painter and landscape architect, who had helped generate this interest in Italian garden design. In the early 1890s, Platt toured the great Italian villas of the 16th and 17th centuries to paint and do measured drawings of their gardens. His *Italian Gardens*, published in 1894, greatly influenced taste in residential landscapes. Similar tours were made by other cultural figures, such as Edith Wharton, whose *Italian Villas and their Gardens* appeared in 1904. Platt began to design private gardens inspired by Italian prototypes in the 1890s. He produced powerful compositions of domestic architecture and garden rooms, organized and connected by visual axes, and borrowing their basic

¹According to a recent textbook of landscape architectural history, the term "Neoclassicist landscape architecture" can be defined as follows: "The Neoclassicist approach to design as practiced in the first part of the twentieth century was variously described as 'formal,' 'architectural,' 'geometric,' or 'Italian.' Formality derived from axial arrangement of sight lines; the architectural quality from use of structured outdoor spaces, similar to those of interiors, and the inclusion of many built features, like balustrades and gazebos; the geometric from its reliance on rectilinear forms; and the Italian from its use of Renaissance Italian garden characteristics, such as terracing and columnar plants....Norman Newton termed the Neoclassicist period the Country Place Era because of the dominance of large estate work in the design practice." (Pregill and Volkman, 1993, 569.)

²Norman Newton, *Design on the Land* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 427-446.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

spatial organization (usually at a reduced scale) from famous Italian historical prototypes.³

Professional landscape architects were quick to capitalize on the expanding popularity of the new, more architectural style in residential landscapes. The number of professional practitioners also increased as a result of this larger market for services, and in 1899 a professional organization, the American Society of Landscape Architects, was founded. Beginning in 1900, with the Harvard School of Landscape Architecture, a growing number of university professional degree programs emphasized architectural training along with an academic study of Renaissance garden history.⁴ A generation of landscape architects emerged in the early 20th century with technical training, academic inclinations, and a profound knowledge and love of French and Italian Renaissance garden design. American landscape architecture had reached a new maturity and versatility, in part due to the training and experience of many landscape architects in residential garden design.

Evidence of the trend toward Neoclassicism was apparent in the public landscape as well. The World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 stimulated public interest in Neoclassicist landscape designs for parks, plazas, and boulevards.⁵ Landscape architect George Kessler, for example, created a series of linked boulevards and parks, including the Paseo (ca. 1905), which successfully adapted the principles of Neoclassicist landscape architecture to the development of a municipal park and parkway system for Kansas City, Missouri.⁶ Another example is New York's Bryant Park. After the 42nd Street Public Library building was completed adjacent to it, the need was perceived for a new landscape design for the midtown park that would complement the Beaux-Arts architecture. The new park (Lusby Simpson and Gilmore Clarke, landscape architects, 1934), which featured allees of London planes flanking a *tapis vert*, complemented the rear facade of the library and created a distinctive new public space. Parks like these demonstrated how Renaissance and Baroque principles could be applied effectively to the design of American urban parks.

³Ibid., 372-392.

⁴William H. Tishler, ed., American Landscape Architecture (Washington: The Preservation Press, 1989), 84-87; 131-135.

⁵According to Norman Newton, the Chicago Exposition also led to the McMillan Commission's activities in Washington, and subsequently to the 1901 McMillan Plan. (Newton 1971, 367.)

⁶William H. Wilson, "The Struggle for an Urban Park and Boulevard System for Kansas City," IN: The City Beautiful Movement (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 12**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Meridian Hill Park is an outstanding accomplishment of early 20th-century Neoclassicist park design in the United States. Few other public parks of the period match its ambitious scale and intent, and few have retained its high level of integrity. The park was first proposed in the 1901 McMillan Plan for Washington because of the unique situation of the site resulting from its topography and its axial relationship to the L'Enfant Plan. The subsequent design of the park, inspired by Italian Renaissance landscape design, crystallized the Neoclassicist idealism that has imbued civic planning for Washington since 1791.

An assortment of Italian villas have been put forward as potential precedents for the park's design. In 1914, Burnap and Peaslee joined members of the Commission of Fine Arts on a tour of Italian, Swiss, and French landscapes as part of their research for the Meridian Hill project. Among the sites visited by Peaslee were Italian Renaissance gardens, such as the Villa d'Este (1550), the Villa Lante (1564, fig. 23), and the Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola (1587, fig. 24), which have strong axial compositions and feature central water staircases. The cascade at Meridian Hill also can be compared to 17th-century villas (as noted earlier) such as the Villa Torlonia and the Villa Garzoni. The mall in the upper park also invites comparisons to French Baroque landscapes: the open-ended view from the north end of the mall into distant space evokes the infinite views of the royal French gardens of the 17th century.

The design of Meridian Hill Park testified to the landscape architects' thorough understanding of Renaissance and Baroque principles. The Italian villa landscape provided the general inspiration for the design, but the park's composition was an original adaptation. Like Charles Platt before them, Burnap and Peaslee abstracted Renaissance design principles and applied them to a new context; the result was an emulation of Renaissance method and sensibility rather than an imitation of a prototype.

The park, for example, is set on a slope, facing south, with distant views of the city and surrounding countryside—a perfect classical Roman villa setting. The site is organized first by a central axis and then by a principal cross axis; it is then subdivided into more or less symmetrical areas. Large structured terraces provide viewing platforms and define the principal sectional relationships. Retaining walls provide flat areas for decorative pavements and reflecting pools, organized symmetrically around the central axis. The overall landscape composition is held together by strong visual axes, although movement through the site is not necessarily along those axes. These general principles, in addition to the borrowing of formal elements, such as balustrades and fountains, from specific historical models, result in a powerful original landscape that serves its unique geographic and social context and evokes the historical landscapes that served as its inspiration.

The extensive use of concrete in the park demonstrates the willingness to adapt to the new context of a 20th-century urban park. The technological achievement of the park's concrete construction, in addition to the park's design, distinguishes Meridian Hill as a nationally significant historical resource. John J. Earley was a craftsman of national

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 13**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

significance whose work was incorporated into many buildings, including the U.S. Treasury Building. Meridian Hill Park represents one of his most refined undertakings, and the American Concrete Institute has endorsed this NHL nomination.⁷

Horace Peaslee was the primary landscape architect for Meridian Hill Park. After leaving Cornell University in 1912, he joined the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in Washington, D.C. In 1946, he looked back and described his involvement with the park: "From the beginning as a landscape architectural designer in 1915...I either personally prepared, or directly supervised the preparation of all drawings for the visible construction of this park."⁸ Peaslee was involved in a broad range of public activities in the Washington area while also pursuing his private practice. He was a leading figure in the Allied Architects of Washington between 1924 and 1934. On the subcommittee on architecture of the American Civic Association, he helped form the Committee of 100 on the Federal City and served as the chairman of that group. He was chairman of the American Institute of Architects Committee on the National Capital for over ten years, and he organized and ran the Architects' Advisory Council, which constituted a voluntary private-sector counterpart to the Commission of Fine Arts. The Advisory Council operated between 1922 and 1932 and had a significant positive impact on the quality of building and street design in the capital. Meridian Hill Park remains as the outstanding design achievement of Peaslee's important and publically-oriented career.⁹ The American Society of Landscape Architects has endorsed this nomination.¹⁰

The scope and ambition of Meridian Hill Park set it apart; the idea of creating a Renaissance villa landscape in the middle of an American city to serve as a public park and cultural institution has no true parallel. The park is perhaps the most ambitious and successful example of Neoclassicist park design in the United States, and it is an example of extremely high artistic merit of the adaptation of Renaissance and Baroque landscape design principles to the municipal park. The breadth of its ambition, its remarkable integrity, and the masterful sureness of its design and construction single it out for recognition.

⁷For the significance of Earley's work, see: Obituary, Journal of the American Concrete Institute 8 (January, 1946):8,9. Summarized by M.K. Schlefer, p. 16. See also the ACI letter attached to this nomination.

⁸Peaslee Affidavit, October 3, 1946, American Institute of Architects Archives, RG 804. As quoted in M.K. Schlefer, pp. 14-15.

⁹William Bushong, "Fellowship and Fraternity," Chapter 3, Part I, Centennial History of the Washington Chapter, 1887-1987, The American Institute of Architects 52. As summarized by M.K. Schlefer, p. 15.

¹⁰See ASLA letter attached to this nomination.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 14**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

This nomination is based on the Historic American Buildings Survey (No. DC-532) carried out in 1985, and on the research published in 1987 by Marion K. Schlefer as part of that project. That survey should be consulted for references to primary and secondary sources used by Ms. Schlefer, which indirectly have provided information for this nomination form.

Archival sources on the history of the park include the papers of Horace W. Peaslee at the American Institute of Architects, Archives (RG 804, RG 801, RG 815, RG 831); and other records of the park at the National Archives (RG 79, accession no. 64A42), and the National Archives, Cartographic Division (RG 66, RG 79).

The Commission of Fine Arts *Annual Reports*, and the Office of Buildings and Grounds *Annual Reports* (Washington, Government Printing Office) both contain information on the park's construction.

Other secondary sources consulted in the preparation of this nomination include:

Goode, James M. *The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C.* Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974.

Lazzaro, Claudia. *The Italian Renaissance Garden.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Masson, Georgina. *Italian Gardens.* London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1961.

Newton, Norman T. *Design on the Land.* Cambridge: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.

Platt, Charles A. *Italian Gardens.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1894.

Pregill, Philip, and Nancy Volkman. *Landscapes in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993.

Shepherd, J.C., and G.A. Jellicoe. *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance.* 2nd ed. London: Tiranti, Ltd., 1953.

Tishler, William H., ed. *American Landscape Architecture.* Washington: The Preservation Press, 1989.

Wharton, Edith. *Italian Villas and their Gardens.* New York: The Century Co., 1904.

Wilson, William H., *The City Beautiful Movement.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 15**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☒ Previously Listed in the National Register.
- ☐ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- ☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- ☒ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #DC-532
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☒ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 11.88 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

A 18 323530 4310020
B 18 323560 4309570
C 18 323420 4309560
D 18 323430 4310020

Verbal Boundary Description:

In the District of Columbia, Northwest, bounded by 16th Street on the west, Euclid Street on the north, 15th Street on the east, and Florida Avenue on the south.

Boundary Justification:

These are the original public park boundaries as created (1910) by the District of Columbia, as developed (1912-1936), and as transferred to the National Park Service (1933). These are also the boundaries, with little or no change, of all subsequent landscape architectural development plans.

MERIDIAN HILL PARK**Page 16**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

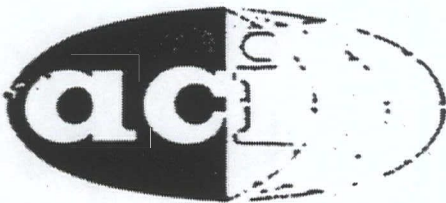
11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Ethan Carr, Landscape Historian
National Park Service, Historic Architecture Division (422)
800 North Capitol Street, Suite 360
Washington, DC 20002

Telephone: 202-343-8148

Date: December 15, 1993

National Park Service/WASO/History Division (418): December 16, 1993



RD LOG NO. 12/6③

TELEPHONE: 313-531-2200
TELEX: 310 221151

american concrete institute

November 29, 1984

BOX 1110
2200 WEST SEVEN MILE ROAD
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48209

#12/6
Mr. Manus J. Fish
Regional Director
National Capital Region
National Parks Service
1100 Ohio Drive S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

Re: National Historical Land Marks - Meridian Hill Park

Dear Mr. Fish:

Mr. Paul Goldner informed us recently of the National Park Service's interest in seeing the Meridian Hill Park of Washington D.C., recognized as a National Historical Land Mark.

The architectural embellishments of the Meridian Hill Park were executed in exposed aggregate concrete by Mr. John Early, Early Studios, Washington D.C. beginning in 1916.

John Early pioneered the use of concrete in architecture, established the fundamental criteria for concrete to suit esthetic and durability requirements and contributed to the embellishment of various structures of national importance. Included are, the Tower of Light, dedicated to Thomas Edison and the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Washington D.C.

The ornamental concrete work in the Meridian Hill Park has historical value because it is one of the earliest and finest examples of architectural concrete in North America, executed under the aegis of a unique Master of the Art.

We consider the Meridian Hill Park of Washington D.C. worthy of recognition as a National Historical Land Mark and support the efforts of the National Park Services in this endeavor.

Yours Truly,

George F. Leyh
George F. Leyh
Executive Vice President

GFL:kmh

Copy: Paul Goldner



American Society of Landscape Architects

July 31, 1985

Mr. Manus Fish
Regional Director, National Capital Region
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive, SW
Washington, DC 20242

RE: Meridian Hill Park

Dear Mr. Fish:

The American Society of Landscape Architects has been informed of the intent of the National Park Service to recognize Meridian Hill Park as a National Historic Landmark. The ASLA fully supports the efforts of the Park Service in this endeavor, and wishes to underscore the importance of Meridian Hill Park as an historic designed landscape in the following:

Meridian Hill Park was designed as an urban formal garden comparable to those in Europe such as the Tuileries in Paris, the Pincian Hill in Rome and other public gardens in London, Vienna etc. Unlike its counterparts however, and, uniquely, it was originally conceived as a public park and not as an estate garden of the nobility.

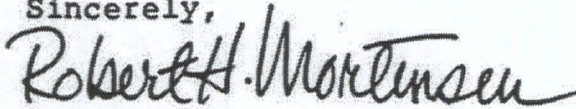
The design, originally by landscape architect George Burnap of the Public Buildings and Grounds, and subsequently by his assistant Horace Peaslee, marries the climatic design responses of southern Italy for shade and air circulation, with many classical design references, including the use of vistas, cross-axes and forced perspective.

The park served as a laboratory for the development of exposed aggregate concrete as a new construction medium. Developed and refined by John Early of Washington to economically reproduce the pebble mosaics of Italy, the exposed aggregate concrete of the park represents one of the earliest and finest examples of the use of architectural concrete in America.

Other notable innovations utilized in the park include an extremely lavish water display using a recirculation system to minimize waste, and the development of a concealed source lighting scheme.

The American Society of Landscape Architects is aware that Meridian Hill Park is currently on the National Register for Historic Places. The historic integrity of this designed landscape and its special features outlined above make it of such significance that it merits being raised to the status of a National Historic Landmark. We recommend this designation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Robert H. Mortensen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "M".

Robert H. Mortensen
President

cc: Edward H. Able, Jr.
Executive Vice President
Patricia M. O'Donnell
Chair, Historic Preservation Committee
Robert W. Good
Chairman, Committee on the National Capital

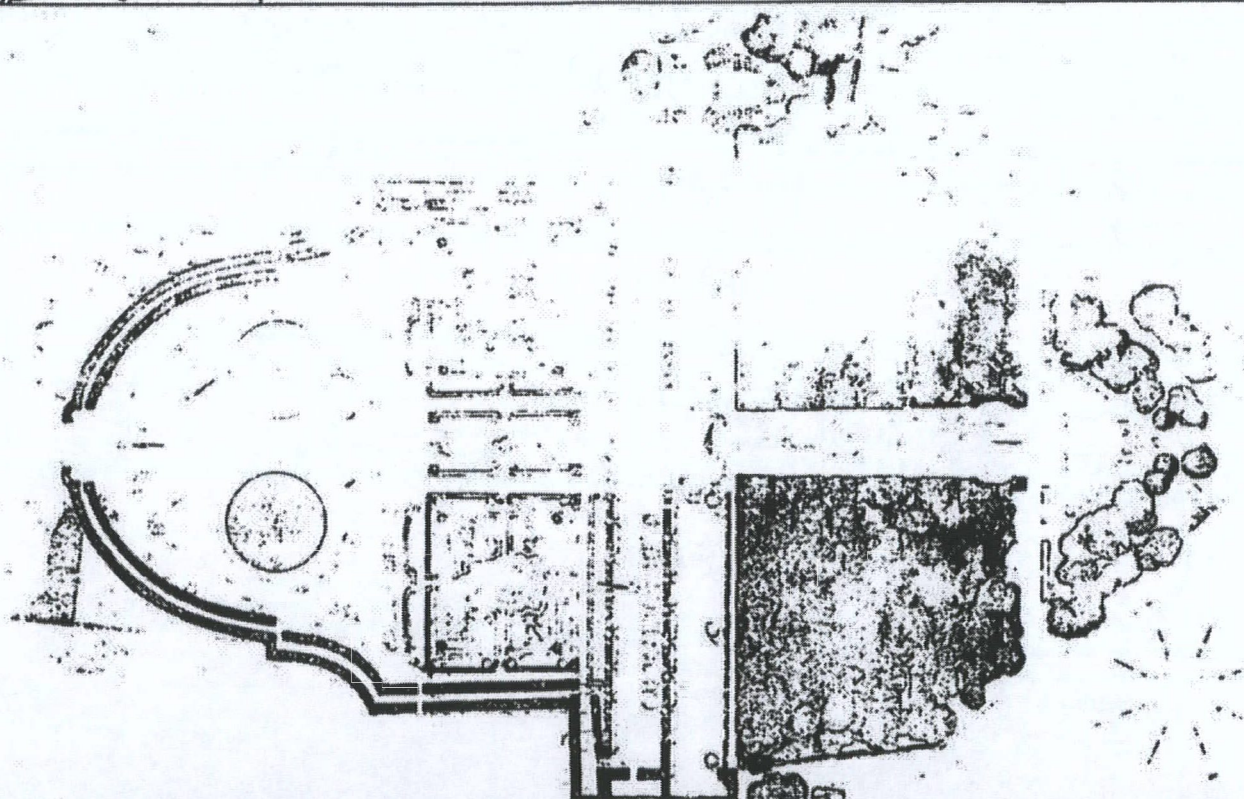
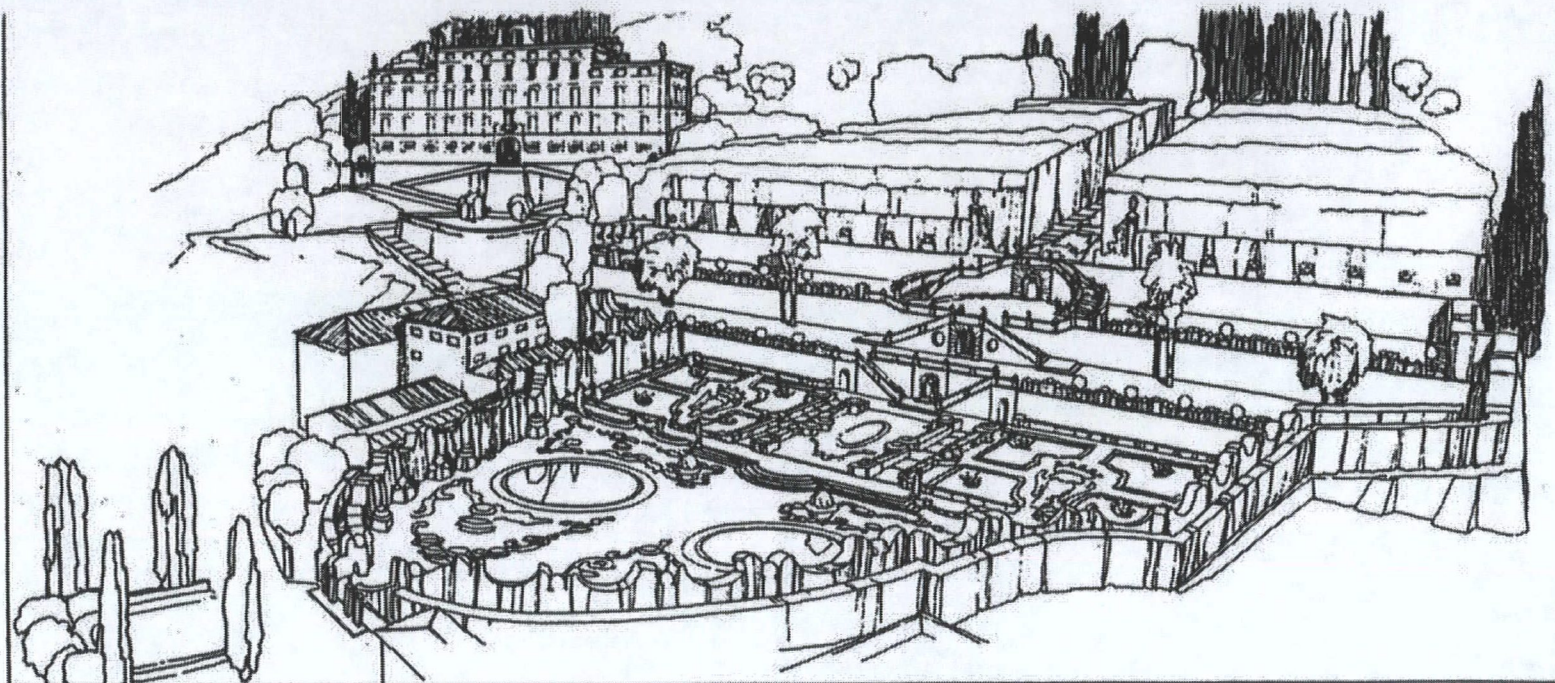


Fig. 20: Villa Garzoni. Collodi. 1652 (Jellicoe and Shepherd)

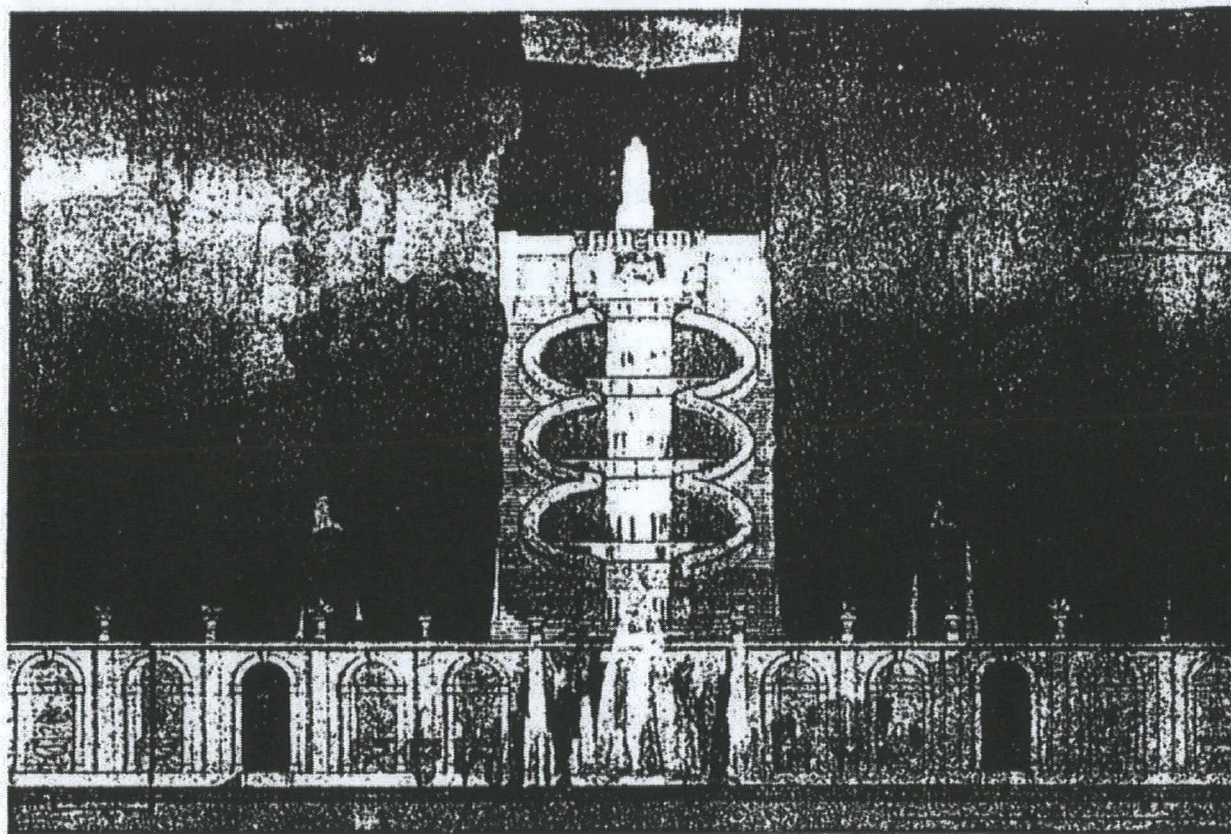
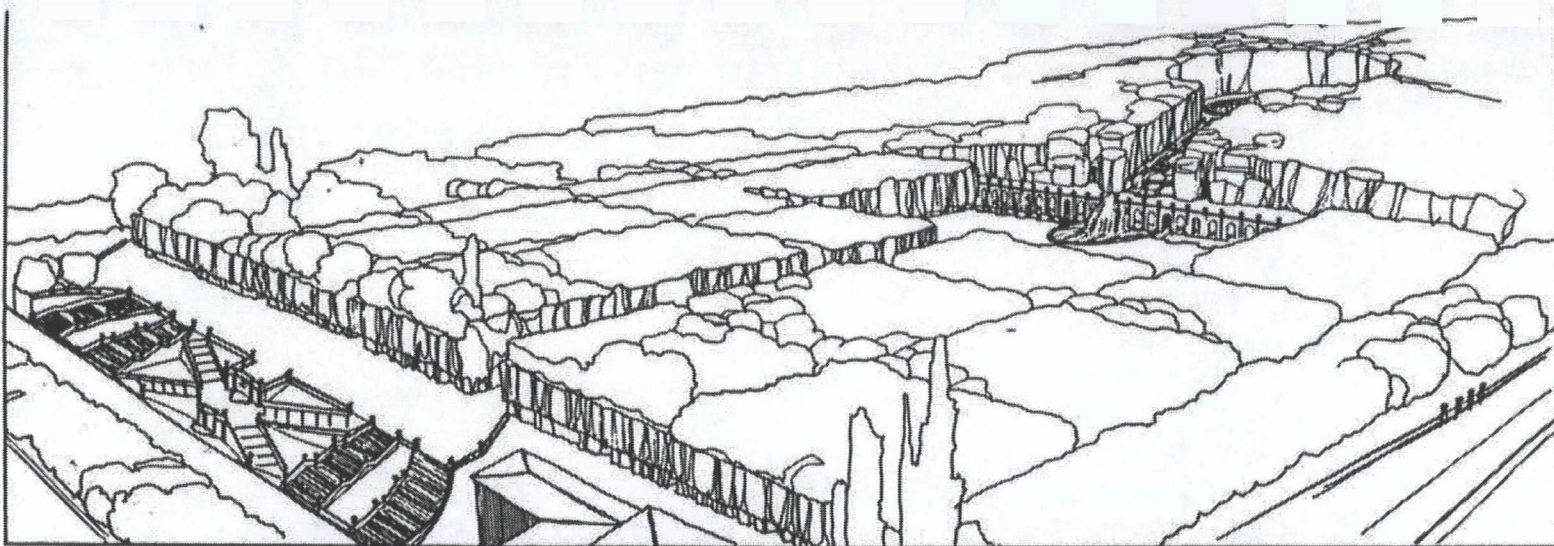


Fig. 40 VILLA TORLONIA, Frascati. Measured elevation of the Cascade

Fig. 21; Villa Torlonia, Frascati (Jellicoe and Shepherd)

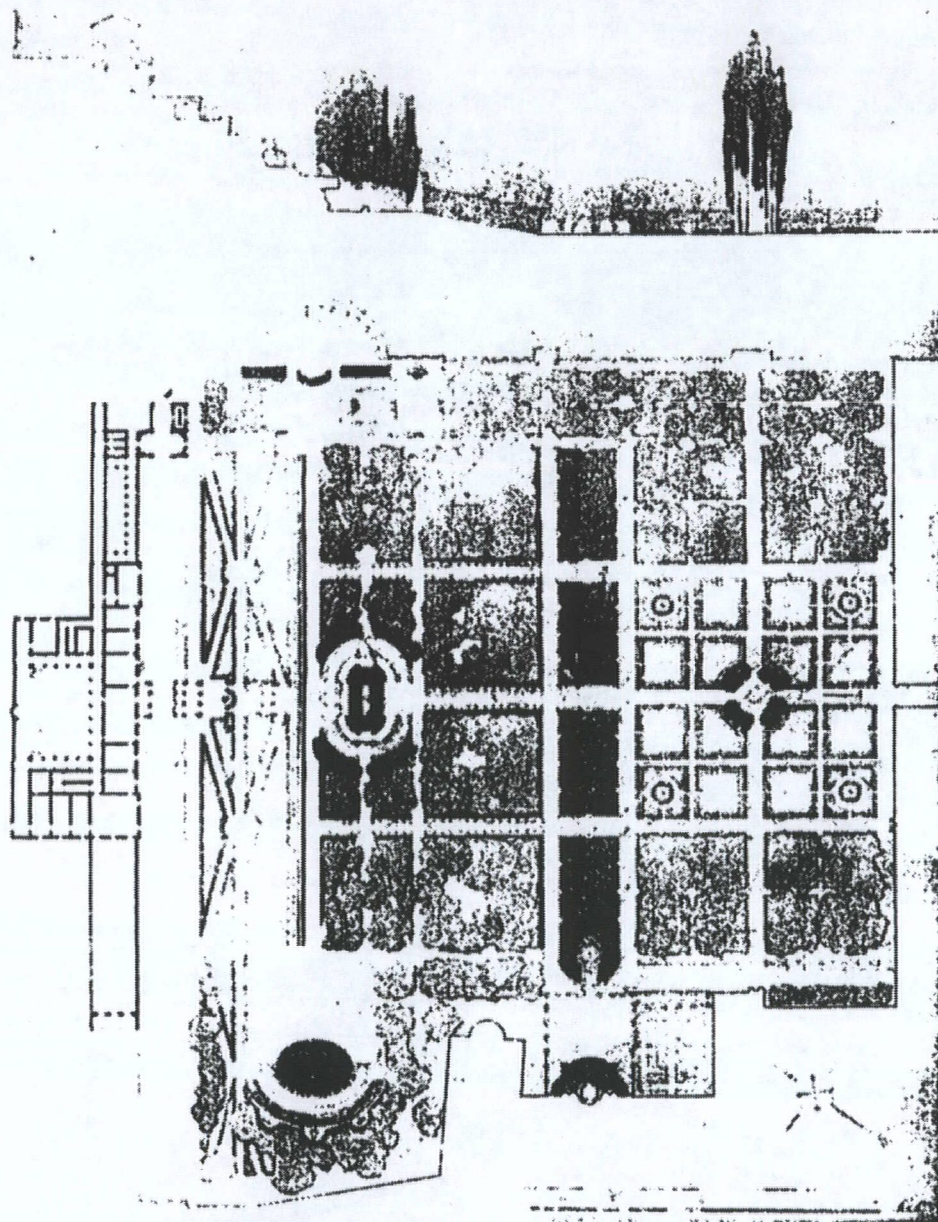


Fig. 35 VILLA D'ESTE, Tivoli. 1550 Pirro Ligorio architect.
Built for Cardinal Hippolito d'Este. Plan partially
restored from a comparison with old prints.
(viewpoints A, B, C, see figs. 72-74)

Fig. 29 VILLA LANTE, Bagnaia. Begun 1564 Vignola architect. (viewpoints A to F see figs. 88 to 93)

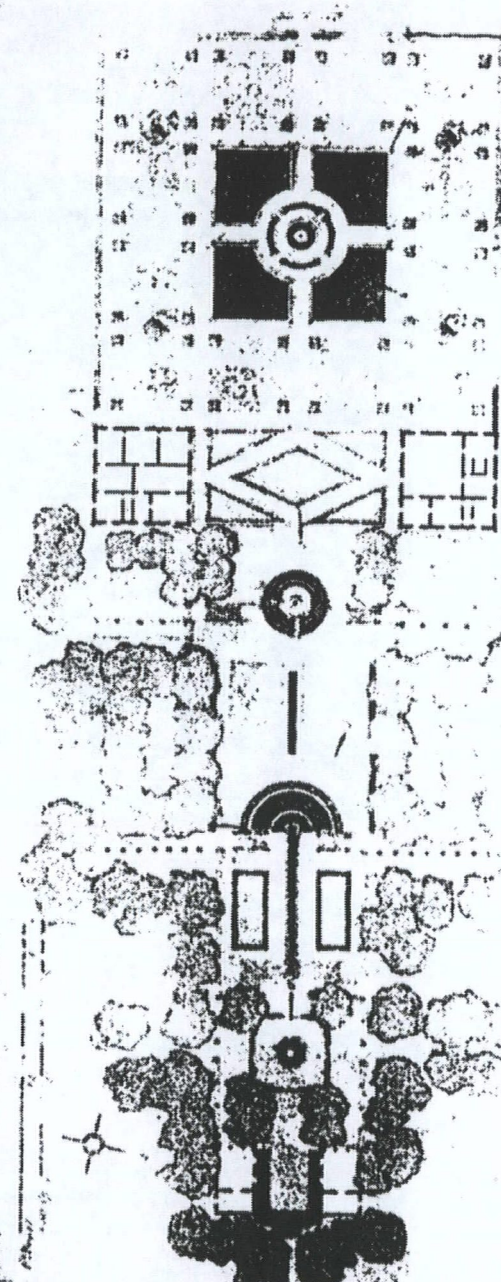


Fig. 23; Villa Lante, Bagnaia; Villa D'Este, Tivoli (Jellicoe and Shepherd)

Appendix 4: CFA Records and Correspondence

Appendix 4: CFA Records and Correspondence (selected)

Letter, Charles Moore (Chair of the Commission of Fine Arts 1915 to 1937) to Gilmore D. Clarke (landscape architect, CFA member 1932 to 1937, later CFA Chair 1937 to 1950), September 19, 1932 referring to night lighting at Meridian Hill Park.

Reply, Gilmore Clarke to Charles Moore, September 28, 1932 with reference to night lighting at Meridian Hill Park.

Extract of Minutes of Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, November 17, 1939, including:

Key plan (with reference letters and numbers augmented for this report) prepared by Horace W. Peaslee and included as an attachment to his 1939 memo.

Exhibit H: Memorandum of Agreements on Meridian Hill Park (a.k.a. Peaslee 1939 memo) with letters and numbers referring to preceding key plan.

Letter, Gilmore D. Clarke, CFA Chair, to Arno B. Cammerer, the National Park Service, November 25, 1939 cover for 1939 *Memorandum of Agreements*

Letter, Arno B. Cammerer to Gilmore D. Clarke December 7, 1939, acknowledging receipt of the 1939 *Memorandum of Agreements*.

Memo re: Fine Arts Inspection of Meridian Hill Park, April 8, 1954, prepared by Horace W. Peaslee, April 9, 1954.

Memo, David E. Finley, CFA Chair (1950-1963), to Conrad L. Wirth, Director, NPS, May 12, 1954 transmitting above memo with comments on items 1 and 12.

Letter, David E. Finley, CFA Chair to Conrad L. Wirth, Director, NPS, May 12, 1954 reporting CFA inspection of Meridian Hill Park and mentioning above memo.

Letter, Horace W. Peaslee to Michael Rapuano, 7 October, 1958 about Meridian Hill Park.

HARVARD CLUB
Boston.

September 19, 1932.

Dear Major Clarke:

Your letter of August 29, has caught me on my wanderings in New England. The whole question of Meridian Hill Park needs to be gone over. The original planting plan was made by Mr. Vitale before he became a member of the Commission, and has been approved by Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Platt and Mr. Greenleaf. The ivy that should have covered the Sixteenth Street walls by this time has not had the attention necessary to carry out the plan. In the lower garden Mr. Vitale (as he said, "in one of his blind moments") consented to a change from holly, which would have been green during the winter, to another shrub that does not remain green the year around. The elms planted on the terrace are disappointingly small.

A serious matter to be considered is as to the effects of night-lighting. The result of such lighting is to lower Washington to the movie standards. As a consequence the colored population has occupied both Meridian Hill Park and the Capitol area to the north, to the exclusion of all others. The lack of sufficient policing in Meridian Hill Park has made that place pestilential morally. Such are some of the problems for solution.

Another and vitally serious problem is the treatment of the Monument Gardens in view of the report of the Engineers against any fill East of the Monument. It has been the consistent policy of the Commission to adhere to the Plan of 1901, save where more mature study has shown a change desirable. Several changes have been made in connection with the treatment of the basin between the Monument and Lincoln Memorial. There is a difference of expert opinion as to whether these changes are for the better. At the west end of the basin and in the treatment of the markings of the eliminated cross-arms there remains work of adjustment to be done.

The Monument Gardens were designed by Mr. McKim, Mr. Burnham, Mr. Saint Gaudens and Mr. Olmsted as the culmination of the Mall Scheme--the jewel in the ring. President Roosevelt impulsively called the gardens too elaborate, but when Senator McMillan explained the model to him he heartily approved. This experience has been frequently repeated. One has to take into consideration the whole composition, and the supreme part played by the Monument Gardens. For this reason I have always pleaded for delay until the completion of both ends should make the high treatment of the center seem necessary. Often one has to wait for public taste to rise to the situation.

Cordially yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore

C O P Y

GILMORE D. CLARKE
COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.

September 28, 1932.

Mr. Charles Moore,
Chairman, The Commission of Fine Arts,
Interior Department Building,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Moore:-

I was glad to have your letter from Boston, dated September 19th. Concerning Meridian Hill Park, I have written to Peaslee, advising him of the date of our next meeting of the Commission, stating that I shall be glad to spend part of the day previous, Monday, October 3rd, with him to go over the problems in connection with the planting at Meridian Hill Park. I note that Mr. Vitale gave very careful study to the planting scheme, and insofar as possible, I expect that it would be best to conform with this plan. I should like to take the opportunity to go into the whole matter with Peaslee and find out what changes, if any, are contemplated by Payne. If substitutions for plant materials shown on the original plan seem necessary, then we can go into the matter and determine whether or not such substitutions are desirable. As yet, I have not heard from Peaslee, so that I do not know whether or not he has returned to town. He wrote me the latter part of August that he expected to be away for a month, so I anticipate that he will have returned before next week.

I was surprised to learn that night lighting is contemplated in the park. By this, I take it that you mean flood lighting. I am, personally, very much opposed to the flood lighting of any park areas, more particularly of a park area similar to Meridian Hill. Sufficient path lighting, however, to make the park safe for those who use it at night is absolutely necessary, but when the lighting takes on the form of stage lighting, then I think it is time to call a halt. I shall discuss this with Peaslee. I have no idea concerning his views on the matter.

If I get to Washington on Monday, the 3rd, I hope that I can see you for a while and go over the entire problem of the Washington Monument Gardens. I am not as familiar with this problem as I should be, and I should like to go into it thoroughly before the matter is brought up before the Commission for discussion.

Another problem concerning the Mall has been mentioned prominently. I refer to the grade separations of the several streets required in accordance with the plan of 1901. I have heard from some of my friends in Washington that the general scheme is being attacked,

September 28, 1932.

more particularly as concerns the cross street underpasses. Of course, these bridges are absolutely essential to the carrying out of a plan for the Mall, and no matter what the engineering difficulties may be they must be overcome in order to produce the plan as originally conceived. I remember going over the detailed grading plans with Mr. Vitale more than a year ago, at which time he asked me to go into his office to express my opinion concerning the general scheme. At that time, the outside drives of the Mall, those which passed in front of the buildings, were shown to cross all of the intersecting streets at grade. This meant that these outside streets took on the appearance of a roller coaster, and I told Mr. Vitale that, in my opinion, the grades of these outside streets must be eliminated in the same manner as for the inside drives. I think that this change was made and that now they contemplate eliminating the grade crossings throughout.

In studying the Mall plan, I raised the question concerning whether or not it would not be better to omit the two inside roads which would be inside of the rows of elms. I cannot help but feel that moving traffic inside of the rows of trees would be very disturbing as one looked up and down the Mall from points either at the Capitol or at the Lincoln Memorial. This would be true, more particularly at night when the headlights of motors were turned on. From a traffic standpoint, it seems to me that the exterior roads could be made sufficiently wide to take care of the traffic. This matter may have been discussed thoroughly before, and I may be bringing up something which has been thrashed out after lengthy discussion. However, I should like to bring the matter to your attention and to the attention of the Commission at the appropriate time. I do not know whether there are any other proponents of such a scheme or not, since I have not discussed it with anyone, but I should think that eliminating the number of roads, rather than increasing the number, was a safe procedure.

I am looking forward with pleasure to seeing you Tuesday next, and if convenient to you, and if I arrive in Washington on Monday, I hope to be able to see you for a little while before the meeting.

It may interest you to know that I heard yesterday in New York that Mr. Vitale had spent a day in the office for the first time in very nearly a year and a half. I understand that he looks exceedingly well and that he has taken on a considerable amount of weight.

Sincerely yours,

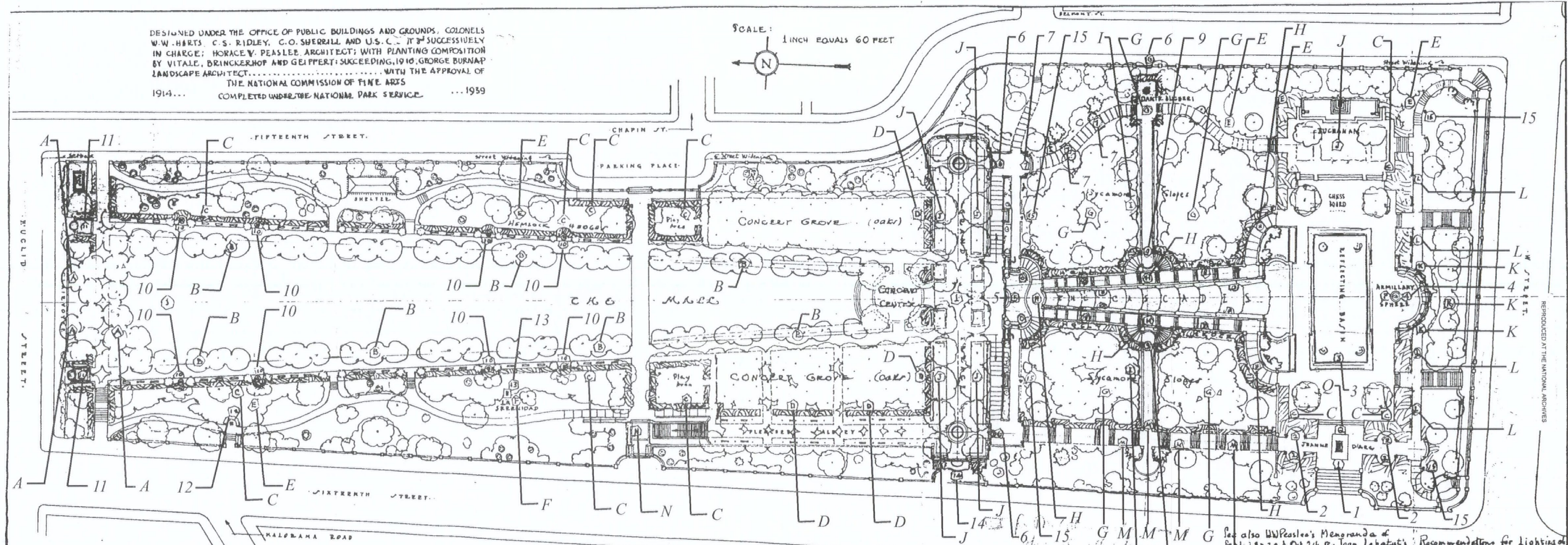


EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
November 17, 1939

MERIDIAN HILL PARK: Mr. Peaslee said that yesterday afternoon he and Mr. Borie and Mr. Manship made a thorough inspection of Meridian Hill Park and have agreed on certain improvements that have to be made concerning the sculpture for the park and also changes in the landscape. These included a recommendation for relocation of the Joan of Arc Statue in the park on the west end of the south terrace facing Sixteenth Street. Mr. Peaslee read a memorandum which he had prepared, which was amended by the Commission in a few instances and approved. A report was sent to the National Park Service, including a copy of the memorandum. (Exhibit H)

DESIGNED UNDER THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS, COLONELS
W.W. HARTS, C.S. RIDLEY, C.O. SHEPHERD AND U.S.C. IT SUCCESSIVELY
IN CHARGE; HORACE V. PEASLEE, ARCHITECT; WITH PLANTING COMPOSITION
BY VITALE, BRINCKERHOP AND GEIPPERT; SUCCEEDING, 1910, GEORGE BURNAP
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT. WITH THE APPROVAL OF
THE NATIONAL COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
1914... COMPLETED UNDER THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ... 1939

SCALE: 1 INCH EQUALS 60 FEET



KEY PLAN : MERIDIAN HILL PARK: WASHINGTON, D.C.

See also W. Peaslee's Memoranda of
Sept 18, 29 & Oct 24 re. Jaan Labatut's Recommendations for Lighting of
and Fine Arts Approvals and Suggestions...

Supplementing by Reference Numbers & Letters
Architect's Memorandum reporting Fine Arts Commission Approvals of Nov 17, 1919.

MEMORANDUM of Agreements

on Meridian Hill Park Problems, Inspection of Nov. 16th, 1939.

Mr. Borie and Mr. Manship of the Fine Arts Commission
Mr. Peaslee, Architect of the Park

Scheme for Sculpture: The special objective of the meeting was to arrive at a general scheme for sculpture in this park. The following agreements were reached for presentation to the Commission of Fine Arts as a whole, and for adoption in whole or in part as a governing policy.

1. The Joan of Arc statue is badly placed as seen from the lower garden, as well as in relation to the elements of the great terrace. It competes with the composition of the terminal fountains and blocks the completion of the original scheme for the use of this section of the park—a concert feature, upon which Olmsted and Vitale were in accord. During the recent park display in honor of the American Institute of Architects, Labatut, Hebrard and others criticized the present site as wholly unrelated in scale to the statue.

After consideration of alternative possibilities, it was agreed that the north end of the mall should be reserved as a possibility for a major memorial problem; and that the Joan of Arc statue should be relocated in an adequate existing setting, in scale with the statue, at the intersection of the axes of the lower garden and west ascent, facing 16th Street. The panel proposed as a site can be bordered with craetagus to prevent trespass and further defacement of the statue.

2. The west ascent axis features four children's corners on the posts of which it is recommended that small bronze sculptural figures be placed reminiscent of fairy stories or folk lore—animals, gnomes, boy-with-geese types. Piers, approximately 2' square, provide eight such sites. (Intimate sculpture intended to be played with, and substantial enough to permit "riding").

3. It was agreed that the reflecting basin does not require the oil jars originally proposed.

4. Question was raised as to the desirability of covering all or parts of the armillary sphere with gold leaf to give it more importance in both day and night display. (Approved by FAC but to be discussed with sculptor and donor).

5. It was agreed that the three fountain niches at the head of the cascades are adequate as they stand, without sculpture.

6. It was recommended that the east and west niches at the foot of the ascents to the terrace afforded excellent opportunity for generous sculptural display.

7. On the east ascent, two upper landings were considered possible sites for hermes; and two top flanking posts, as possible positions for urns or other finial features.

8. The enframing walls of the cascade (to be backed up with solid hedges) were considered as affording possible sites for as many as twenty figures, ten on each side. Example, hermes at Villa Farnesiana, Caprarola.

9. On the Dante axis, at the cascade ends of the cross walk copings, it was agreed that four large oil jars could be used advantageously as proposed.

10. As mall features, the use of large urns was carefully considered. It was agreed that eight such features could be used to give scale and added interest to the mall. It was agreed that these should be large in scale—with pedestals perhaps as high as the hedge backup (approximately 6'); surmounted by urns about 5' in diameter; of concrete composition similar in tone to the other park work; with applied metal reliefs. Examples at Padua, Verona, Versailles.

11. The possible use of the niche sites at the ends of the mall walks was considered but agreement was not reached as to just what feature, if any, would be approximately in scale with the general scheme and with the urns mentioned above. The use of white water in rising mass, filling the entire niche, is suggested as a possibility. (Suggestions approved by FAC).

12. A minor site was noted at a secondary entrance to the park from 16th Street, suitable for a drinking fountain or small feature.

13. Attention was called to the possibilities of finding a better site for the Statue of Serenity, where it could be seen partly from above. No site was agreed upon.

14. At a previous inspection by the Commission, there was discussion of the possibility of using the 16th Street niche (terrace end) as a possible position for sculptural display. In the interim between inspections, the water display had been increased in volume. It was agreed today that this display is entirely adequate without sculpture.

15. It was agreed that the shell-type drinking fountains designed for Meridian Hill were to be recommended for use in other parks in lieu of less decorative forms.

These various recommendations are covered by corresponding numbers on key plan filed with this report.

Planting Problems:

In discussing the disposition and setting of sculpture, attention was directed to other related problems. The following recommendations offered

for Commission action, are covered by corresponding letter - reference on the key map.

A. The north end of the mall was left open to tie-in with a prospective embassy scheduled for the north side of Euclid Street. This site now becomes a potential apartment house location subject to development unrelated to the design lines of the mall and probably tending to unbalance the design. It was agreed that the mall treatment is sufficiently long and ample to permit termination within the park and street limits. It is recommended that the open grille be closed with a heavy planting of ivy or euonymus; or replaced eventually by a solid wall connecting the two niche motifs. The value of the opening from Euclid Street is discounted by the low street grade, minimizing view of the park.

It was also agreed that tree planting should carry across the mall end and parking somewhat as indicated on key plan.

B. It was agreed that a formal tree line should be added to each side of the mall to furnish morning and afternoon shade for seats at present not usable because of direct exposure to summer sun.

C. It was agreed that formal hedge lines throughout the park, at present badly damaged by unrestricted trespass should be restored and reinforced by continuous trespass barriers of mesh as used in north entrance, or fencing of equivalent resistance.

D. It was agreed that replacement plantings are required to separate areas, as between promenade paralleling 16th Street and concert grove; continued as backup to promenade terrace parapet.

E. Special attention was directed to the need of immediate action to stop trespass through informal plantings, with total loss of all ground cover, and packing of earth; as well as the desirability of thinning and transplanting where material is becoming too crowded.

F. The defacement of the Serenity Statue was specially noted, this having progressed from the application of lip-stick to broken fingers. The suggestion is made that a barrier planting of crataegus might deter such trespass.

G. The enframement of the Dante Statue was adversely commented upon, especially the feeling of an unprotected platform on a sharp bank, instead of an enclosure. It was agreed that the evergreen hedge enclosure originally planned should be provided, with three deciduous trees removed (two flanking, one behind statue). Use of *ilex cranata* was suggested. Incidentally, comment was made about one or two hemlocks in the center of hillside quadrants; rather conspicuous by their isolation; with question raised as to whether their number should be augmented or the existing specimens moved near to the borders of the areas. (Note: Mr. Clarke disapproved use of hemlock in sycamore grove.)

H. It was agreed that the cascade enframement was entirely out of key, with its irregularly-spaced cedars separating the design lines of hedge and wall; and that cedars should be replaced with material contributing to an

ultimate tree hedge closely tied-in to the parapet. The widening of the present holly hedge was considered as a possibility; or the use of clipped *ilex crenata* as a filler between present holly and wall. (Some of this material is already in position where the ends of the Dante axis walks meet the cascade).

(Note: Mr. Clarke expressed preference for one material preferably the *ilex opaca* extension.)

Attention was directed to over-conspicuous gutter lines, and to gutters which obviously serve no purpose since they are above adjoining hillside areas. It was recommended that these be covered with carefully arranged over-hanging material; and that grades be raised or superfluous gutters removed.

J. It was agreed that the panel in front of the Buchanan should be raised and adequately treated; that lower branches of two front trees be trimmed up; that trees should be checked in general for pruning, especially where undergrowing hedges are involved. (A similar comment applies to panels on main terrace where grade has sunk below copings. This should be raised and seats placed on flagstone to eliminate bare spots where turf cannot be grown).

K. As agreed at previous commission inspection, the hedge sections enframing exhedra is to be raised to urn tops with special planting masses back of obelisks. To correct present hedge thinning, the removal of one too-close tree (adjacent to exhedra) is recommended.

L. On east-west walk immediately south of the exhedra, attention is called to seat spaces for which seats have not been provided - ten in all. Placements of these benches is recommended. Two additional seats of curving lines were recommended for the south termini of the east and west ascents.

M. Attention was directed to need of overhanging material to subordinate stepped parapet walls of west ascent; and to short returns of hedges needed at cross axis to conceal gutter ends.

N. It was noted that a planting box atop the entrance from 16th Street contains no planting whatever.

O. The committee of three discussed at some length what could be done with the pockets flanking the cascade and top fountain basin at base of terrace wall. It was unanimously agreed by the Lay Committee that the problems involved were such as to challenge the ingenuity of the Chairman of the Commission.

P. (Supplementing the recommendations as filed, the Commission agreed on the desirability of replacing the hedge protecting the armillary sphere with a decorative grille so designed as to prevent trespass).

Q. (Supplementing the recommendations filed, the Commission approved the suggestion of the Chairman that the Joan of Arc Statue be surrounded by

a solid mass planting of craetagus out to form a level trespass barrier; with the base of the statue raised above this planting level.)

General Problems:

It was agreed that the major problem in connection with park is one of adequate supervision and maintenance. An investment and valuation totalling over two million dollars, warrants as much supervision as is given to a public building and its grounds; and the investment in plant material in particular is too large to permit the continuance of such vandalism as is now evident. Damaged plant material should be replaced; ragged hedges underplanted; and steps taken to insure future protection. The few instances of fractures in the concrete work of the park should receive attention before minor breaks require major attention.

As part of the program to make the park serve its intended purpose and an appreciative section of the population, the central concert feature should be developed as planned, if necessary with a temporary wood structure on the lines of the original design, serving until funds are available for its replacement in permanent materials. The development of incidental music, permitting promenade and enjoyment of the park features is to be encouraged; together with a payseat concession, if this measure will tend to stimulate the attendance of a supporting audience.

The general steps toward lighting which have been reviewed by the Commission are approved subject to incidental suggestions as to modification or extension which have been offered by the Commission members. (Permanent installations to be made with the understanding that the utilitarian side of such installations will be properly subordinated to the aesthetic).

Compiled for the Committee.

(Signed) Horace W. Peaslee

The Recommendations included in this memorandum were adopted at the Fine Arts Commission's Meeting of November 17, 1939, with supplementary comments bracketed. It was agreed by the Chairman that the contents might well be publicised by the National Park Service with the objective of attracting contributors of sculpture meeting the requirements indicated.

Nov. 17, 1939.

373
3
November 25, 1939.

My dear Mr. Cammerer:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on November 17, 1939, considered in detail a memorandum submitted by Mr. Horace W. Peaslee, Architect of Meridian Hill Park, recommending certain sculptural, landscape, and other improvements to that Park which were suggested by a committee consisting of Messrs. Borie and Manship of the Commission of Fine Arts, and Mr. Peaslee. The Commission commends the items contained in this memorandum to your attention for consideration in the further embellishment of this important park area. (A copy of the memorandum is attached hereto.)

You will note, in particular, that it is recommended to relocate the statue of Joan of Arc on the west end of the south terrace facing Sixteenth Street.

The Commission hope that the suggestions made in this Memorandum may be carried out from time to time and proffers you whatever assistance rests within its power to render.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Hon. A. B. Cammerer,
Director,
National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

EXHIBIT H

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS ONLY
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

December 7, 1939

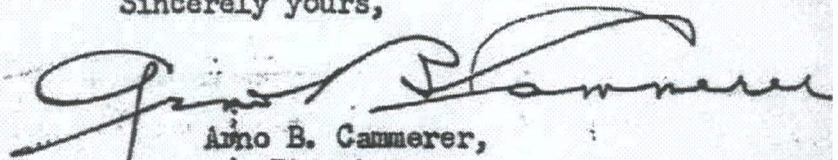
Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke,
Chairman,
The Commission of Fine Arts,
Interior Department Bldg.,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Clarke:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 25, enclosing a copy of the Memorandum of Agreements on Meridian Hill Park. Problems prepared by Messrs. Borie and Manship of the Fine Arts Commission and Mr. Peaslee, architect of the Park. It is noted that the Commission of Fine Arts concur with the suggestions made in the memorandum and recommend that they be carried out from time to time. This Service is pleased to receive these suggestions and has directed that the work recommended be performed by the National Capital Parks when funds for its execution become available.

The offer of assistance made by the Commission of Fine Arts is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


Arno B. Cammerer,
Director.

THE FOLLOWING IS A COPY OF THE MEMORANDUM
BY HORACE W. PEASLEE, ARCHITECT, REFERRED
TO IN COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS MEMORANDUM
TO MR. WIRTH, DATED MAY 12, 1954

DESIGN OF HORACE W. PEASLEE ARCHITECT
1228 Connecticut Avenue
Washington D. C.

MEMO RE: Fine Arts Inspection of
Meridian Hill Park, April 8, 1954

April 9, 1954

A follow-up on previous inspection of November, 1939, to review recommendations made at that time and action taken, if any; also to consider possibilities for location of Carillon tower.

1. Mall: Tree plantings needed along walks and at north end as previously recommended; no action taken.
2. Mall: Flanking hedges, Need of underplanting with small hemlock material to replace loss of lower branches. Question as to vertical or sloping trimming. Use of hedge niches for memorial urns. Use of walls-end niches for sculptural and fountain features. Additional hedge plantings needed to complete plan in Italian manner: along promenade, above 16th Street (against fence) and back of great terrace.
3. Focal point: Mall still lacks terminal feature: not supplied by small statue. Reconsider use of low circular feature as designed connected to terrace, for use as stage or concert platform as originally intended, with adjacent grove for seating.
4. Joan of Arc relocation: Out of scale and out of place on terrace: question of site in lower garden entrance or north end of mall.
5. Pavement Sinkages: Present conditions unsightly and disgraceful. Up ended sections against parapet should be broken up, removed and replaced with temporary surfacing if necessary. Sloping approach to cascade overlook should be replaced with double step. Seats along promenade, which have settled for lack of foundations, should be lifted.
6. Serenity: Statue literally defaced for lack of protective measures recommended 15 years ago. Nose broken. Pyracantha planting at side should be carried around back and front with fence reinforcement (as with lower garden sphere)—set back sufficiently to reveal inscription. Approach paving should be removed.
7. Dante: The Committee inspected the Statue of Dante, at the east side of the Lower Garden, and felt that its setting should be formalized.

8. General Observation about protection of Park Sculpture—reference to Dupont Circle vandalism. Why not enclose with fence, as in Farragut until all over planting of pyracantha becomes established as in Scott Circle.

9. Wall and Walk Repairs: In general, concrete work has stood up well. Settlement trouble apparent in east descent from upper terrace, with spalling on corner of pilaster. At junction of each ascent from lower garden end east cascade walk, a section of reinforcing metal, too close to surface, should be cut out and surface restored. Entire park should be gone over to check parts where repairs are needed. One point along 16th Street needs first attention: Original cast cement balustrade and urn panel, should be replaced with scrubbed concrete work. Three balusters broken off: One urn disintegrating and in danger of falling on passersby. Architect should be given opportunity to revise details.

At entrance to lower garden walk, surface spalling: Apparently applied after base had set; crust should be removed, base chipped for bond and resurfaced—possibly with asphalt mix.

10. Planting: In addition to items noted above re terrace hedges, etc., special attention should be given cascade enframingent. Scraggly cedars should be removed and replaced with sightlier material. Consider English hollies and Schottii junipers. Flanking hedges, now sloping, should be stepped down in level sections paralleling parapets. Hedge heights should be raised.

Basin side plantings should be filled in: material reconsidered, and mask fountains exposed. Basin fronts and bottoms could be advantageously painted with colorful swimming pool paints.

11. Park Accessories: Park seats in need of going over for replacement of rotted slats. Concrete seats need drainage outlets kept open. Seats comfortable; drinking fountains decorative, suitable for general park use.

12. Carillon Site: Very desirable, central location where chimes can serve large area and contribute to park values. Ample room for congregation of people with playing fountains, plantings, overlooks, etc., for their added enjoyment during recitals. General location preferred—east side area about opposite Belmont Street, centering on curve of east park ascent; possibly overlapping walkway. Base of tower might serve as passing-through park entrance.

Sgd.
Horace W. Peaslee

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
7000 Interior Department Building
Washington 25, D. C.

May 12, 1954

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission were very glad to have you meet with us on May 6th, and appreciated the opportunity of discussing with you the condition of the parks in the District of Columbia, particularly Meridian Hill Park, the Nevius Tract, and the question of the removal of temporary war buildings which are now occupying sites in the parks.

Following the meeting with you, the Commission made an inspection of Meridian Hill Park. They noted that some of the paved walks have settled and that a number of benches are in need of repair; also a portion of the walls, especially the balustrade on 16th Street, would seem to be in need of prompt attention because of settlement in recent years. We shall be glad to send you a memorandum on the subject, embodying these suggestions in greater detail.

As regards the Nevius Tract, the Commission would like to have an opportunity of discussing further with you the question of the location of the carillon which the government of the Netherlands has presented to the people of the United States.

As regards the removal of the temporary war buildings, the Commission feel that concerted action should be taken for the removal of certain buildings that affect vistas in the Central Area. In our opinion, one of the first temporary war buildings that should be removed is the one at 17th Street crossing the Mall; also the small temporary buildings at 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

We would like to co-operate with you on these matters and, if you care to do so, would be delighted to have you meet with the Commission at our next meeting on Thursday, June 17th.

For The Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,
Sgd. David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Conrad L. Wirth
Director, National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

HPC/DEF/pav

EXHIBIT D

C O P Y

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
Washington 25, D. C.

May 12, 1954

MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Conrad L. Wirth,
Director, National Park Service,

FROM : The Commission of Fine Arts

SUBJECT : MERIDIAN HILL PARK

This is to confirm our conference of May 6, at which the present physical and aesthetic condition of Meridian Hill Park was discussed. It is our hope that in your next budget provision can be made for such work of rehabilitation as proves necessary after a thorough study of the Park's present condition.

Our attention was called to this matter by Mr. Horace W. Peaslee, principal designer of the Park, and we suggest that you confer with him. Attached to this memorandum is a copy of one by Mr. Peaslee listing the items which he considers most pressing. Some of these refer to structural conditions, such as settlements and spalling, the seriousness of which cannot be questioned. Others propose changes in the planting; with most of these we agree in general, but we have not studied them in detail. In respect to Mr. Peaslee's item No. 1, we agree as to additional rows of trees and shaded seats across the north end of the mall. We are strongly opposed, however, to planting trees outside the existing lateral walks, thus reducing the width of the mall as an open space.

Item No. 12, referring to a possible carillon site, is not included in the subject matter of the Commission's present recommendation. We plan later to make a general study of the important problem of the location of the Netherland's Carillon.

Let us express our urgent hope that you will take personal interest in the improvement and maintenance of Meridian Hill Park. It is an extraordinarily dramatic site and has been developed into a very beautiful public garden of the formal type. As the trees and specimen plants grow, the park will increase in beauty and impressiveness. But such a park needs constant and carefully planned maintenance and protection.

It is quite probable that another such public garden will never be built in Washington—or anywhere in the country. We owe it to the past and to the future to preserve this uniquely beautiful work of garden art.

Sgd. David E. Finley,
Chairman.

MR. WILSON

Peaslee file

Office of HORACE W. PEASLEE Architect

Fellow of The American Institute of Architects
Consultant on Planning of Building and Grounds

Frank W. Cole, A.I.A.
Associate Architect

7 October, 1958

1228 Connecticut Avenue
Washington 6, D. C.

Mr. Michael Rapuano
830 Third Avenue
New York 22,
New York

Dear Mr. Rapuano:

To enlist your interest in a project of special concern to me, I am sending you a key plan of Meridian Hill Park which it was my privilege to develop over a twenty-five year period. It was projected originally by George Burnap as a public garden comparable to those in continental capitals: but the actual development of the plans, under the guidance of the Fine Arts Commission, was handled by me -- first as Architect of Public Buildings and Grounds, and later in my private office. Vitale, Brinckerhof and Geiffert projected the planting scheme which was "executed" by various park employees. It is in regard to the latter that I am especially concerned.

The project was sponsored by Mrs. (Senator) Henderson who lived in a brownstone castle opposite the site and was active in promoting 16th Street as "The Avenue of the Presidents" -- with exotic legations designed by her Architect-Retainer, George Oakley Totten. The upper Mall was to have been the foreground of Paul Cret's French Embassy -- but with the Embassy's shift to the John Hays Hammond house, the tide turned to Massachusetts Avenue: Other (rented) embassies were vacated: Mrs. Henderson died: and the park deteriorated. Two efforts were made to utilize it -- for a popular series of Chamber Music concerts in the lower garden and for a fete in connection with the International Congress of Architects in the forties -- at the outbreak of the War. At that time, Jean Labatut worked out a brilliant scheme for illumination of the cascades which was tried successfully and then filed away. I've tried fruitlessly to revive the setting for meetings of the AIA and the ASLA. Now the park is in the doldrums, not too well lighted, mostly used by after-dark damsels with their swains, and by petit apaches.

The Fine Arts Commission has made various recommendations which have not been carried out -- moving the Jean d'Arc statue to a site in scale with its small size: adding decorative sculpture to the Mall: adding Mall border plantings and the like. All these were consolidated in a report which I made for the Commission years ago -- which you should see.

At the present time, sycamores, oaks and elms are succumbing to disease and something must be done about them: but, worst of all, the projected cascade enclosure missed fire completely with holly hedges too far removed from the enclosing walls and spindly cedars where one would expect to have cypresses.

The "Pincian Hill"-type band concerts on the terrace top never materialized (for lack of the projected concert setting) and the great terrace with its Villa Medici fountains lacks focus. To make matters worse, there have been settlements, fracturing certain pavements, on which no repairs have been made.

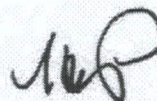
The cascades and fountains may be utilized in connection with projected pageantry of World's Fair scale in the early sixties. The water works are being repaired and, with public pressure, may be operated more than semi-occasionally. Cryptomeria may replace the cedars, and good trees, the diseased ones. The relatively few structural defects in the new concrete method I developed may be repaired. The Maid will never be moved unless the Fine Arts Commission follows up on its recommendations. A new patroness may be developing to stimulate interest. We might even see a revival of pageantry on the chess-board paving pattern.

I have asked Mr. Wilson to let you see the 1939 mimeographed report confirming Commission recommendations and any other later material and I would welcome an opportunity to go over the ground with you to bring these recommendations up to date. We have an opportunity in connection with "Mission 66", and pending pageantry in which Mrs. Robert Guggenheim is interested, to make this park serve the intended purpose.

Would you have an hour to spare, before or after your next Commission Meeting? I would be glad to put another son of EZRA up at (or for) the Cosmos Club if Gilmore hasn't already looked after your welfare.

I am making one last effort in the hopes that while I am still alive I may see this park functioning as the intended "public garden".

Sincerely yours,



Horace W. Peaslee, F.A.I.A.

Wm. Wilson

att

HWP: so'c

OCT 8 1968

WASHINGTON D. C.
THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
RECEIVED

